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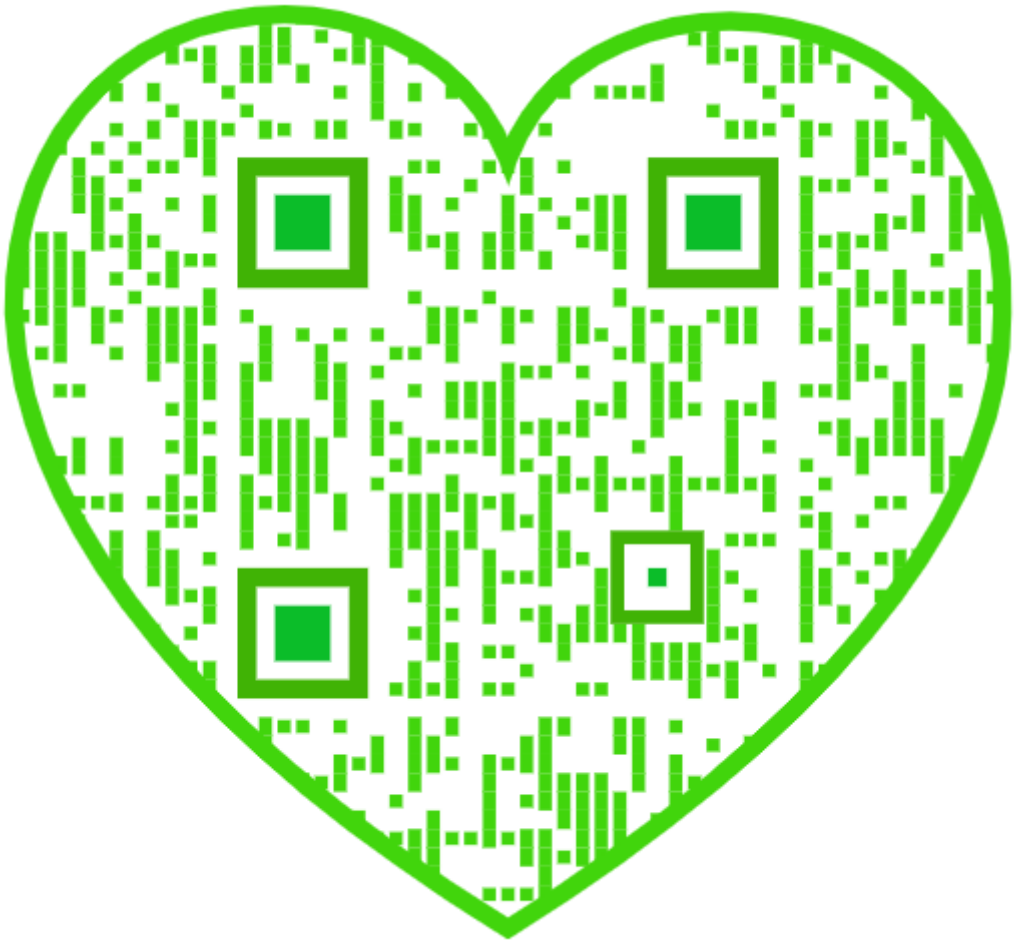

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LITTLE ILLUSTRATED BOOKS ON

OLD FRENCH FURNITURE

II. FRENCH FURNITURE UNDER LOUIS XIV

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LARGE ARM-CHAIR COVERED IN WOOL VELVET
(End of the Louis XIV style)

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LITTLE ILLUSTRATED BOOKS ON FRENCH FURNITURE II

FRENCH FURNITURE UNDER LOUIS XIV

BY ROGER DE FÉLICE

Translated by
F. M. ATKINSON

ILLUSTRATED.

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INTRODUCTION: SOME SETS OF FURNITURE UNDER LOUIS XIV

ENV

The Louis XIV style is one that chance has endowed with a splendid name, *Louis Quatorze.* . . . Those sonorous, sumptuous syllables, as rich as the gold of the Gallery of Mirrors at Versailles, are they not in themselves completely expressive? If the Louis XV style was to express a whole society of voluptuous refinement, the Louis XIV style is verily the style of the King. It was to satisfy his taste, to express his mind, to titillate his pride and to proclaim his glory that Le Brun and Le Pautre devised their pompous decorations, that Perrault and Mansard marshalled their columns and raised their cupolas, that Le Nostre planted his alleys on lines meted out by stretched cords, that the Kellers founded bronze, that Domenico Cucci and Claude Ballin chased precious metals, that André-Charles Boulle cunningly wedded brass and tortoise shell with ebony in the Louvre, and at the Gobelins the lapidaries matched the stones of Florence, the cabinet-makers put together their ingenious cabinets, the silversmiths made tables and pots for orange trees out of solid silver, the tapestry workers wove their enormous hangings stitch by stitch, while at

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Tourlaville the glass workers made mirrors larger and clearer than those of Venice.

Whole volumes might be written on the Louis XV and Louis XVI styles without even a mention of the princes whose names they bear, but this would be quite impossible with the style we are about to discuss in this little book. Although he had not, whatever that sharp-tongued Saint Simon may say, "a mind rather below the average," Louis the Great was quite ordinary in intelligence and was furthermore extremely ignorant, two defects that he redeemed in the exercise of his vocation as king by dint of good will, application, and hard work; he was not, as we would say, much of an artist—and he clearly proved this on the day when, in order to remedy the distressed state of his finances, he decided with equal absurdity and magnanimity to melt down all his prodigious store of plate, whose bullion value was nothing in comparison with its artistic value, while he kept his diamonds —but he insisted on deciding everything, and always made some alteration in the designs submitted to him. He had of course his own personal taste, which Colbert consulted and which Le Brun, who shared it, contrived to impose upon the artists of every kind who worked under his absolute domination. What was specially dear to this *super-man*, who, as Mlle. de Scudéry says, "when playing billiards retained the demeanour befitting the master of the world," was majesty and grandeur allied

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with sumptuousness; and also symmetry and regularity; qualities which, as we shall see, are the fundamental characteristics of the style to which he has given his name.

The best artists and craftsmen, then, worked to the orders of the King, who continually needed new furniture for his royal mansions of the Louvre, Saint-Germain, Fontainebleau, Marly; they worked for the princes of the blood, for the Ministers of State. This engrossed all, or nearly all, their output; they were taken away from their guilds and brigaded at the Gobelins or the Louvre, where they were subjected to a rigid discipline. The great nobles, the wealthy financiers, the high magistrates, imitated the Court according to their means, but were obliged to fall back upon second rank purveyors and on less precious materials. Their furniture is none the less in the same style as that made for the King, all blazing with magnificence.

If we come down one degree lower, and try to make acquaintance with the homes of the well-to-do bourgeoisie or gentlemen with good broad lands, as they are disclosed in the inventories made after their owners' death and in the reports on the affixing of seals on property, which inventories have been preserved in great numbers and in some cases published, and are the most authentic sources of information on this subject, do we always find furniture of the Louis XIV style? We come too often on tables or arm-

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chairs *à piliers tors* or *à colonnes torses* to feel quite certain of it. In reality the joiners continued generally to make for what was called "*la noblesse distinguée*,[1] people in military or civil employment, rich traders, propertied middle class folk," plain undisguised Louis XIII furniture, even down to the time when the suppler shapes of the Regency and the Louis XV period were imposed upon them. Better still, in more than one region, but especially in Guienne and in Gascony, they continued throughout the whole of the eighteenth century to make, alongside of the great Louis XV linen cupboards with S-shaped pediment, the cupboards with four doors with panels decorated with "diamond points," known as "cabinets" in those provinces.[2]

One or two of these inventories, which convey so rich an impression of vivid reality, will allow us to penetrate into the homes of this middle class of the seventeenth century.

Shall we first of all enter the house of Messire Jean de Layat, former Treasurer-General of the King's Household? This is in the rue de Cléry, close to the Porte Saint-Denis, which is still all white, for we are in the year 1686. M. de Layat is wealthy: a year ago he sold his office

1 Intermediate between the *haute noblesse* and the country squires, who were often very poor.

2 We must not, however, exaggerate: many cupboards whose simplicity shows that they were meant for middle class use have also, as we shall see in the second part of this volume, the two doors, the straight cornice, the plain panels, and other characteristics besides, that belong undoubtedly to the Louis XIV style and the same may be said of several types of seats.

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for a high price, and he possesses somewhere around 400,000 livres, or about two million francs in present-day money. And yet, perhaps a trifle mean, or exceedingly prudent, he has only an establishment very far below his condition. His house is small, inconvenient, comprising very few rooms arranged in the old-fashioned way.

In the stables we have two horses "with long tails"; in the coach-house a *carosse coupé* with six plate glass windows "in the Venetian style": a modest equipage. On the ground floor are M. de Layat's cabinet and the lower hall. In the cabinet the Treasurer-General used to receive callers on business, seated in an arm-chair covered with green cloth before his walnut bureau with five drawers. Upon the bureau was a writing desk of painted wood; for the visitors there were seven chairs with twisted legs covered in plain *moquette;* adorning the chimney-piece six alabaster figures, some porcelain cups and some large shells, as fashion demanded. Ranged along the foot of the wall stand the books: no great reader is M. de Layat, for there are just seventy-nine all told, five of them folios, and most of them pious works. No hangings. All this is very modest: M. de Layat would not like anyone seeing his furniture to imagine that he has made a big fortune in the King's service; and it would distress him exceedingly that we should know that this chest in the corner is a strong box in which there lie many a bag of louis, of pistoles, gold crowns and Spanish doubloons.

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In the lower hall adjoining we see the first hint of the dining-room that will not come into general use for a score of years, for it is furnished with an oval table made of deal, on folding legs, with its green serge cover and six beechwood chairs with twisted uprights, covered with moquette and stuffed with flock.

Let us now go upstairs. As we cross the antechamber we see between walls hung with a German tapestry containing human figures, two tables covered with Turkey carpet, four chairs covered with tulip-patterned moquette, and we guess that M. and Mme. de Layat are fond of a game of three-handed ombre in the chimney corner with some old friend; for here is a triangular card-table covered with green serge standing on its twisted walnut pillars. Let us lift the imitation (*cafart* *) [1] damask door curtain lined with green linen and pass into the "petite chambre." Here is where the owners of the house sleep, in "two little beds, very plain," so plain that the inventory does not describe them. On the wall there is a mirror in a black frame. The table, walnut with ebony filleting, is accompanied by two round tables for candlesticks or girandoles; two arm-chairs are covered with flowered velvet, four others are of carved walnut; a cabinet, which contains Mme. de Layat's jewels, her knick-knacks, her lace, and a few curiosities, is a rather elegant piece; it is "marquetry in pewter, ebony and tortoise-shell,

1 The asterisk refers to the index at the end of the volume.

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and composed of two *guichets*[1] and nine drawers."

A "passage serving as a vestibule" brings us to the state-room. Hung with Flemish *verdure* tapestry with small figures, it is furnished with five arm-chairs and five ordinary chairs; four paintings on canvas were not considered worthy of having the subjects or the artists mentioned.

This state-room is the salon, and also, when friends have been invited, the dining-room; but no one sleeps in it, except perhaps, on occasion, some distinguished guest. The bed is the first thing to draw our eyes: immense, beplumed, overladen with draperies, it is a *couche a bas piliers*, an "angel" bed; it has *bonnes graces** and *cantonnières*,* and four large curtains of pink damask with big white flowers; the *pentes** of the tester, the great bed end and the curving end (*chantourné*),* the three pieces of the valance (*soubassement*),* the counterpane, are all white satin, embroidered here "with several different designs in gold and silk," and there "with silk twist." No fringes, a plain *molet** of imitation gold. The tester is crowned with four knobs covered with damask and satin, adorned with tufts of white ostrich feathers. If we pull back the counterpane we shall find a coverlet made of alternate squares of China satin and chintz. We need not be surprised to see in the house of these old people a bed with such delicate

1 A very small cupboard with two doors, surrounded with drawers.

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and tender colouring: it is the custom of the times.

A handsome oval table in the new fashion is made of red Languedoc marble, edged with black marble, and set on its base with six columns of carved wood, painted azure and relieved with gilding; two gilded round tables match with it. The sofa of carved wood painted cedar colour is equipped with a mattress and two bolsters of striped brocade; a valance with silk fringe falls to the very floor; the same brocade covers the six arm-chairs "of lacquered wood, azure" that are ranged, three to the right, three to the left, on each side of the bed. A small chair contents itself with a modest dress of *moquette*.

The walls display three large tapestries from Auvergne[1] with figures. Near the bed there is a wooden crucifix on a background of black velvet with a gilded frame, and a mirror with its frame of plate glass with plaques, corners, capital and other ornaments of gilt brass, both hanging by gold cords. Besides these there are a portrait of the King, painted on canvas after M. Mignard; a *Family of Darius* on canvas "after the print by M. Le Brun"; and again, set on its console-table, a chiming clock "made by a Paris workman," with its case of marquetry on tortoise-shell, decorated with brass pilasters and vases. Lastly, the chimney-piece boasts a set of ornaments displayed on miniature consoles: two vases made of ostrich eggs mounted in silver,

1 Aubusson or Felletin.

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two others made of cocoanuts on silver feet, three large shells of mother of pearl, and eighteen little cups of Chinese porcelain.

Now let us visit old M. Nicolas Boileau, one of the Forty of the Académie Française. He is the most home-keeping of men: born in the court of the Palais, at the foot of the Sainte Chapelle, he is now, at three score and ten, living, as he will die, in the shadow of the cathedral, "the Notre Dame cloisters." We are prone to imagine this crusty bachelor, who never was anyone's lover but the Muses', breathing the dust of his aged folios in profound disdain of all the refinements and elegancies of life. How far from the truth! The smartest men in society delight to frequent his company; in old days he used to have the Dukes de Vivonne and de Vitry to supper; even now he has for visitors the greatest swells at court, the Marquis de Termes or M. de Ponchartrain the younger, the secretary of state for naval affairs. Without being very rich, this bourgeois among bourgeois has ample means, and we know the scorn and contempt he flings at poets less well off than himself. In his presses he has plate to the value of five thousand livres and more; in his stable "two black coated mares, with tail, mane and ears undocked, of eight years or thereabouts," who draw him to his house at Auteuil in "a carosse coupé, with braces and springs, and three plate glass windows, lined within with slate coloured cloth, the outside with an edging of

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aurora coloured silk fringe, with cushion and curtains." His house in reality is as well furnished and equipped as that of the very M. de Layat who not so long ago, as Treasurer of the King's household, regulated the quarterly payment of the pension the poet received from his Majesty.

The antechamber is very plain, though the walls are adorned with six high narrow lengths of tapestry in "verdure d'Auvergne," representing animals; but his own chamber is of an "exquisite niceness." This is hung with white and crimson damask, in wide alternate stripes, there is a portière of the same, while the window, as is customary, has only a curtain of white linen. A crystal chandelier hangs in the middle of the room, four girandoles on mirror plaques complete the lighting: a large handsome mirror in its "border" also of mirror glass, with a capital, and a little pier-glass with gilded frame, help to brighten the room. This Despréaux is a strange person, a real original character: he has an exceedingly handsome bed, and all to sleep in himself! Indeed there isn't another bed in his house, except the modest pallets of his servants. This bed is a four-poster, made of walnut, and its curtains, tester and head are silver moire and green damask embroidered with gold flowers, in stripes; the *cantonnières*, *bonnes graces*, *pentes* and the four knobs are crimson velvet edged with gold galoon; other large light curtains covering the first are of crimson taffeta; the

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counterpane is silver moire with a wide border of green damask, embroidered with flowers in silk and gold. A very gay room is this, with all these silks of dazzling hues : in these days there is no shrinking from setting complementary colours side by side. Two armchairs, five ordinary chairs and a stool are of walnut wood and crimson velvet, a small sofa and two arm-chairs of gilded wood are covered in brocade embroidered with flowers in silver. Of the three tables one, and three *guéridons* as well, is of marquetry in coloured woods, the second is walnut parcel gilt, the last is a writing table of wild cherry. In the fireplace there are great fire dogs with brass knobs. Lastly, the chiming clock in its case of brass and tortoise-shell marquetry is a very handsome piece, it will figure by itself in the inventory, after its owner's death, at a sum equal to that set down for all the chairs together, as much as the plate glass mirror, which is assessed at half the value of the bed.

Opening out of his own chamber the "Law-giver of Parnassus" has three rooms or cabinets. The one in which he works has walls of painted wainscoting. In front of his bureau, made of walnut veneer, equipped with numerous drawers, is the black morocco arm-chair in which the old poet sits, snugly wrapped about with an "Armenian robe of scarlet cloth, with gold button-holes, lined with skins." The other seats, an arm-chair and an ordinary chair of turned wood, and two carved chairs, are covered in

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tapestry of "Turkish" * stitch. An oak table is hidden by a cover of green cloth, and carries two little Chinese coffers or caskets made of wood. The books marshal their tawny gilded backs on eight shelves made of deal and edged with green cloth; in front of the fireplace is a screen filled with green damask, on the walls, on their brackets, two busts of bronzed plaster (doubtless Aristotle and Horace?), a chiming clock in its marquetry case, not so valuable as that in the bed-chamber, and another little clock, "an alarm with weights and cords." Here is a gentleman whose hours are well governed! The mantelpiece carries on its shelf and its little brackets the inevitable set of ornaments; forty-five pieces of Chinese porcelain, bottles, cups, saucers and other things, two lions on their delft feet, four "pieces of painted earthenware" and four little brass busts.

The second cabinet is less severe. It has two windows, and is hung with white and flame-coloured damask; it contains the greater part of the books, in three low "bookcase" cupboards with two doors adorned with a trellis of brass wire: one of these is a handsome piece, in marquetry of brass on ebony, the others are plainer, made of cedar and of walnut. These are pieces of furniture greatly in fashion, quite recently invented: for all his great age Despréaux can be no enemy to novelties. Like all his contemporaries, from bishops to kings, his eyes gladly find diversion in the fantastic works of the Far

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East. Here is a cabinet of Chinese lacquer with little drawers, and porcelain everywhere : sixteen pieces on the chimney-piece mingled with ten pieces of "fayance d'Hollande."[1] A *braizier*[2] of well-polished copper stands on its iron base, and there is an oak table covered with a Turkey carpet and carrying a brass spy-glass, various coffers and writing desks. The seats are of many-coloured tapestry in Turkey stitch, and there is a mirror framed in gilt wood. The windows have double curtains, one of white linen, the other of cherry-coloured damask lined with taffeta. Here also there are fine warm colours everywhere.

Finally, in the last cabinet, with no fireplace, whose walls are covered with a commonplace Bergamo[3] tapestry with big stripes laden with flowers, a walnut cupboard in two parts with four doors, turned chairs covered with Bruges satin,* a walnut table with a serge cover bordered with flame-coloured damask, a coffer of leather studded with nails ; a mirror with frame and top of walnut and with copper plaques ; and lastly, a wash-basin and salver of faience, both handsome and rare pieces, for they will be set down at thirty livres, a considerable sum at the moment we are considering. The cupboard in this cabinet will be valued merely at ten livres.

Let us add, throughout these five rooms, forty-

1 Of Delft.

2 Brasero.

3 Coarse, common tapestry, originally imported from Bergamo, but then made at Rouen.

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two pictures on canvas and on wooden panels, of which we have, unluckily, no details, but which are mainly landscapes. Such was the simple, but snug and, on the whole, elegant furniture of a celebrated writer in 1710.

Now we shall betake ourselves, in the slow, picturesque way that Mme. de Sévigné will describe later, to the borders of Brittany and Maine, and by the help of some "time machine" carry ourselves fifty years backwards; and here we are at the Château de Vitré, the home of the Duc de la Tremoille. We shall not follow at every step the official charged with the duty of making an inventory of the furniture, for the mansion, which is one of the big seats of the province, contains more than eighty halls, chambers, cabinets and clothes-closets or wardrobes. Here the furnishing has some claim to pomp and splendour; in Paris it would perhaps bring a pitying smile to the faces of smart society, but at Vitré it is truly princely.

The important apartments are the "great chamber of Monseigneur," the "great chamber of Madame," and the "little chamber of Madame." The first two are of imposing dimensions, and Monseigneur's is hung with a high-warp tapestry with figures, the *Story of Jonah*, and embellished with two pictures of religious subjects. A large Turkey [1] carpet covers the middle of the paved floor; the bed is all in

1 In the seventeenth century this name was given indiscriminately to all Oriental carpets.

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crimson damask and taffeta; the seats (two arm-chairs, two without arms, and six folding stools) and the screen display the same damask, a small day-bed is in blue damask. Two folding screens, each of six "doors," of red serge with gilt nails, struggle as best they can against the draughts; two candlestick-carrying round tables are of wood, painted blue, with gilding. The two tables are oak, and very plain.

Madame's great chamber is much like Monseigneur's: tapestry hangings in nine sections, eight of which represent fountains and landscapes, and the ninth the labours of Hercules; a Turkey carpet on the floor; a great bed of crimson damask and velvet; two chairs with arms, a small arm-chair,[1] four chairs without arms and six folding stools in the same velvet; two bench seats, their wood painted red, and with loose covers of a serge of the same colour. Here there are three tables, one of which is ebony with four pillar legs; two *guéridons* or candle-holders are painted the colour of ebony. A large ebony cabinet opens with two "windows" and two "layettes," as drawers are still called. The mirror is framed in ebony and hung on red silk cords. In the huge funnelled fireplace there are great fire-dogs with brass knobs. It is not, we must confess, a very feminine room: we are still

1 What is the difference between a *chaise à bras* and a *fauteuil*? About 1660 the fauteuil is a seat with arms and a low back, as in the time of Louis XIII, and doubtless dating from that time, while the chaise à bras has a high back. Presently all chairs with arms will be called arm-chairs.

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very close to the somewhat sullen austerity of the Louis XIII style.

Madame's little chamber, the one she really lives in, is more engagingly attractive. Its hangings are a fresh brocatelle with a blue ground and fawn-coloured flowers "with white edges"; the draperies of the bed are white velvet with little blue checks, lined with white taffeta, and with gold and silver fringes; four chairs and six folding stools are of the same velvet, and there is a large chair with arms mounted on wheels for hours when Madame is ailing. The satin screen shows the same colours as the hangings, fawn-coloured flowers on a blue ground, two tall blue screens with six leaves allow an intimate corner to be arranged for reading, embroidery, or gossip with the ladies of Vitré, Mlle. du Plessis, that funny Mlle. de Kerbone and that comical Mlle. de Kerquoison, whom roguish Mme. de Sévigné[1] calls Kerborgne and Croque-Oison, or even at times the amiable Marquise herself.

The chamber is not very small, for it contains three tables besides, one of which is "folded in triangle shape," and a large coffer of red leather, decorated with gilt nails.

In the other rooms, the "*cabinet aux devises de Madame*," the cabinet of Monseigneur's portraits, the "cabinet of M. Le Blancq, Monseigneur's secretary," there are some pieces of furniture that deserve a glance; a mirror framed

1 Her chateau des Rochers is a league and a half from Vitré; and she even has a house in Vitré itself, the "Tour de Vitré."

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in ebony and seven silver plaques; a "semi-circular seat serving as a day-bed, covered in green *mocade*,* with its head-piece in the same *mocade*," which is assuredly nothing else than, sixty years before its time, the "gondola" chaise-longue of the following century; many painted pieces, a green table, a red cupboard, a green cupboard, a little dresser of painted wood with yellow mouldings, a straw chair, the wooden part of which is green. Lastly, in the "new chamber," the *emmeublement** of mourning: the bed of black velvet, damask and taffeta, which is brought into one or other of the great chambers when a death in the family calls for "draping" as a sign of grief.

Let us take another journey across space and time. We are now in 1701, in Languedoc, in the Chateau de Brisis, which belongs to the Vicomte d'Hérail de Brisis, who has just died. He was one of those small country squires that make up almost the whole mass of the French nobility and are the solid backbone of the King's armies. It often happens that they are poorer than many a farmer, and that they are driven to sell their last patch of land and become labourers or vine dressers in others' service—simple villeins. The Hérails de Brisis are far from such extremity; they represent pretty fairly the average provincial gentlefolk. And they are not mere bucolic gentry, for one room in the mansion is entitled "the chamber in which the gentlemen of the house pursue their studies."

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Maitre Joseph Delacroix, doctor of law, lawyer and commissary deputed by the Seneschal of Nîmes, makes out the inventory of the deceased man's property. He finds in the kitchen cupboard—M. d'Hérail had no other dining-room—some small pieces of silver: a ewer with its basin, six forks, six spoons, two small salt cellars and two candlesticks. But the stable is not too well equipped: one black horse and an old one-eyed mule. Of the twelve rooms of the dwelling house the hall, the small hall, the chambers and cabinets, two only are equipped with hangings, one with old *bergame*, the other with *ligature*;[1] the seven beds are draped merely with serge, red or green or yellow, or sealing wax colour; the seats are comparatively numerous, as is always the case in these country homes: there are over a hundred, but not an arm-chair among them. More than half of these chairs are all wood with no other trimmings; eighteen are straw chairs, twenty-one are covered with moquette, and only six of them with "old needlework tapestry." There are eleven small tables, some walnut, the others deal, or painted black. Four of those great cupboards that have been made in the provinces for some two score years, and which in the South of France are known as wardrobes, hold clothes and linen; they are made of chestnut. Let us add two small cupboards of greater antiquity, an old dresser, an old cabinet and—

1 A common stuff, generally in a pattern of small checks, woven of wool and linen thread.

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the only items that belong to a simple luxury—two guéridons, a small cabinet with drawers, a small mirror and a few "little curios by way of ornaments." That is all. Now Maitre Joseph Delacroix has forgotten nothing, seeing that having opened the door of a little room he went so far as to dictate to his clerk the following: "*Item.* Another chamber at the side—apples, fresh chestnuts and onions."

And the plain country folk . . . what furniture did they have under Louis XIV? The answer is simple: they had, in a manner of speaking, none at all. Is this, as we are almost always told in books, through their extreme poverty and distress? The point deserves a little examination. We most frequently form our opinion of the peasants' condition in the seventeenth century from three kinds of documentary evidence, namely, from pictorial documents, which are practically confined to four or five pictures by the brothers Le Nain, as many by Sebastian Bourdon, and certain engravings of Callot; secondly, from certain literary texts, which are always the same, La Fontaine's *Death and the Woodman*, the celebrated phrase of La Bruyère about "certain wild animals, male and female, scattered about the countryside," and a letter or two of Gui Patin; and lastly, from more precise documents in the shape of the administrative correspondence of the intendants with the Comptrollers-General, the *Memorandum of the King's Commissaries on the distress of the*

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people, the *Detail de la France* by Bois-Guillebert, and Vauban's *Dîme royale*.

These last named sources of information have a quite different value from the first. The Le Nains are intensely and admirably sincere and honest, but the peasant of their depicting is the peasant of a province that had been terribly trampled over by the men of war for several generations, and their pictures are prior to 1648. In any case, the famous *Repas des paysans* in the Louvre[1] shows us two beggars who are assuredly very wretchedly poor, but the vine-dressers who are offering them the bread and wine of hospitality are very comfortably off: they have a well furnished bed, quite "bourgeois" in style and standard, a window with little leaded panes that is little less than a luxury article, and their son is playing the violin. Callot and Bourdon are the least veracious of artists, and Callot gives us no information except for the period of Louis XIII. La Fontaine does not pretend to put forward his woodman as a type of the peasant of France. La Bruyère's passage is admirable in its eloquence, and rivals in beauty Millet's *Man with the Hoe*, but must be taken cautiously just because it is so intent on its effect. The King's Commissaries, d'Aguesseau and d'Ormesson, bear valuable testimony to the horrible distress that reigned at the moment of their enquiry (1687) through Maine and the Orléans country, but a close reading will show

1 In the La Caze room.

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that they are describing a state of poverty that has only been in existence for a very little while. As for the testimony of that supremely honest fellow de Vauban, in 1707, we have to acknowledge that it is most afflicting.

But there is in existence a whole category of documents still more unexceptionable—the inventories from which we have already drawn so largely. If we run through these we find quite a different face on the matter. From these we discover, not without some astonishment, from one end of the realm to the other, a very large number of peasant families living, if not in affluence, at least in a condition far removed from indigence; and this more markedly at the close of the reign, in spite of the disastrous wars, the passage of troops to and fro, the continual levies of men and of taxes, the times of dearth, the dreadful winter of 1709. This fact is especially striking if we do not lose sight of the extreme simplicity of manners prevailing at this period, except in the very highest classes of society. The peasant was to grow rich under Louis XV especially, but he had begun already in the middle of the preceding reign.

Labourers and vine dressers have a little pewter ware, and even a silver cup to relish their wine; they have linen, sometimes in great store; their women spend comparatively lavishly on their toilette. They very often have a "skirt of violet serge with a bodice of red-flowered satin, with its sleeves of red serge," a "skirt of red cloth

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with a bodice of brocade" or of damask. The wife of a labourer in Champagne has in her chest: "first, a skirt of purple serge with bodice of orange damask, trimmed with guipure and silk lace; second, a skirt of fustian with its bodice of green-flowered damask, with two ribbons for shoulder straps; third, another petticoat of red London serge, with bodice of orange damask trimmed with guipure below and lace above." We are very far removed here from the rags that draw tears of grief and pity from historians such as Michelet.

These contradictions can be reconciled. At this period, when the circulation of wealth is so sluggish, one province may very well be suffering from extreme scarcity while another is enjoying a certain prosperity; and passing causes—a bitter winter, a drought, a cattle plague—may bring about a few years of famine; but from year to year, good or bad, Jacques Bonhomme's comfort goes on increasing little by little.

Certainly it is not by the possession of furniture somewhat pleasing to the eye, or even moderately convenient that this humble ease of circumstances is displayed. The peasant has a coffer or two, sometimes iron bound and with lock and key, sometimes of leather studded with nails; a cupboard with two doors; *marchepieds* or steps to his bed that serve as chests, in which he stows away his clothes; benches or rude stools for the only seats; no tables: a table is improvised at need by fixing a plank on two trestles, or on casks cut in two and turned over, or on stools.

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A luxury gift he will make to his wife after a fine harvest, and if the tax collector has not been too greedy, is a small mirror framed in black wood, or a religious wood engraving all brightened up with fine colours. But for the most part he behaves like everybody else, clown or gentleman, like the King himself at Versailles; where furniture is concerned everything else is sacrificed to the bed. Here is what we find in a labourer's house in 1716, "a tall pillared bed, with eight pieces of green serge with silk fringes and *mollets*"; with a peasant of Nogent-sur-Marne in 1672, "a coverlet of red ratine trimmed with silk lace and bordered with silk," etc.

The very precise and detailed inventory of the goods of a village dame in the neighbourhood of Paris, a widow at Issy, in 1665, is interesting to analyse. At her death her furniture comprised an oaken kneading trough, an oak chest with lock and key; a bed with a "*custode*[1] and *bonnes graces*," four straw chairs; "a middle-sized mirror with black frame." The whole is valued at eighty-eight livres, fifty-five for the bed by itself. The household linen is worth twenty-one livres; the body linen and clothes ninety-eight livres; and household utensils come to fifty-five livres. We must not be astonished at these modest sums: let us not forget that Boileau's magnificent bed which we have described was only set down at eighty livres.

From this glance into the châteaux, houses

1 Curtains.

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and cottages of olden days we can come to the conclusion that the man of the end of the seventeenth century, as a general rule, takes little thought for the beauty or convenience of the articles that surround his private life—the famous state bed being a matter of vanity—and that he assigns to his furniture a very inferior share in his budget of expenses even as he does in his pre-occupations, and that what he is above all susceptible to is the beauty of fabrics. We have, in short, met with few simple pieces of furniture that can be declared to be of the Louis XIV style. And as for peasant furniture, we have either seen none, or it was so coarsely and rudely made of ill-planed planks roughly knocked together that before long it served for firewood. Are we then to stop at this point, and refrain from writing this little book, which, in talking of Louis XIV furniture, sets before itself the aim, most modest and overweening at the same time, to be practical and to leave on one side the furniture of museums and of the mansions of multi-millionaires? No, indeed, for if we but search a little we still find pieces of furniture—except perhaps tables—that are simple and that really possess the characteristics of this style; and as Louis XIV pieces do not at this moment enjoy the amazing vogue which everything Louis XV and Louis XVI now has, it is often possible to acquire them more cheaply, though they are much more rare. And then we are to discuss the Regency style: now, the first

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quarter of the eighteenth century is the period in which comfort is born, when dwellings, like manners, begin to be very like our own; when, in short, the manufacture of "bourgeois" furniture suddenly spreads and develops throughout the whole kingdom.[1]

1 We must here express our sincere gratitude to the amateurs and the directors of museums who have been so kind as to permit us to reproduce the furniture in their possession or under their care: Mesdames Dumoulin, Dupuy, Egan, de Flandreysy, Moutet; Baron de la Chaise, Messieurs Boulley, Boymier, de Brugière de Belrieu, Cérésole, Delafosse Desportes, Ducros, Fidelin, Guillonet Marquis d'Isoard, Abel and Edouard Jay, Julien, Larégnère, Loreilhe, Dr. Moog, Pascaud, Philippe, Prével, Tastemain, Zaphiropoulo; the Directors of the Musée des Arts Decoratifs and the Carnavalet Museum, in Paris, and the Directors of the Museums at Metz, Mulhouse, Nancy, Strasbourg, Vieux Honfleur and Vieux Rouen.

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PART ONE : THE HISTORY OF THE TWO STYLES

In the decorative arts the period of Louis XIII had been one of the retreat of French taste before the influence of the Northern countries. Cabinets of ebony and of marquetry had been imported from the Low Countries and from Germany; sumptuous chairs of ornate leather for the most part came from Spain; in France itself every form of ornamentation had grown heavy in the Flemish fashion. Then came the reign of Mazarin, and with it a regular Italian invasion. In short, when Louis XIV took the power into his own hands, furniture was essentially cosmopolitan, and we might declare that his long reign was, in this respect, merely one continuous effort of the French spirit to eliminate the elements in these importations from abroad that were discordant with the traditional genius of the race, which loved measure, clarity, sober elegance, an effort also to assimilate what was not incompatible with itself. This work of elimination and assimilation was not fully accomplished until the days of the Regency. It was not in any case a phenomenon peculiar to the art of house furnishing, or even the applied arts in general; we can trace the same movement of evolution in sculpture, from

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Simon Guillain,[1] for example, to Coysevox in the latter years of his long career, or from Franqueville the *Italianizer* to Robert le Lorrain, whose Horses of the Sun, at the hôtel de Rohan, are a masterpiece, preposterous indeed, but so brilliantly French !

Signor Giulio Mazarini was a great lover of pictures, sculpture, and every kind of work of art. In the real palace that François Mansard had built on for him to the hôtel Tubeuf, and which the painters Grimaldi of Bologna and Romanelli of Rome had decorated for him, he brought together, by dint of the millions that cost him little or nothing, the richest collection that had as yet been seen in France, pictures, statues, furniture, fabrics, goldsmith's work, jewels, gems and medallions.[2] Nearly everything came from Italy : if his heart, as he pretended,

1 When he made the exquisite statue of the Duchess of Burgundy as Diana.

2 The inventory of this almost unbelievable accumulation of riches was drawn up in 1653 by a little clerk from Rheims, who looked after the cardinal's private affairs, and whose name was Jean Baptiste Colbert; its publication we owe to the Duc d'Aumale. The enumeration is still incomplete, as Mazarin had seven years longer to live. To the cardinal's passion for his works of art we have a very curious testimony from Loménie de Brienne. "One day," he writes in his *Memoires*, "I was walking in a gallery in the Mazarin palace, when I heard the cardinal approaching; I knew him by the sound of his slippers, which he was shuffling along like a man in a very weak condition just recovering from a serious illness. I hid behind a tapestry, and heard him say: 'I shall have to leave all this!' He halted at every step, for he was very feeble indeed; and turning his eyes to the object that was nearest his gaze, he would say from the depth of his heart, 'I have to leave all this!' and turning about, he went on, 'And that too! I shall never see these things again, where I am going!'"

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was French in spite of his language, his taste had never become naturalized. The hangings and the breadths of stuffs were Genoa or Milanese velvet, or Florentine brocade. The tables were Florence stone; the cabinets were the *stipi* variously bedecked with lapis, amethyst, cornelian gilt bronze, silver, tortoise-shell and painted miniatures that were made by the craftsmen of the Grand Dukes of Tuscany; others, inlaid with ivory and mother of pearl on ebony, came from Naples; and those that were of iron *repoussé* and damascened came from the workrooms of the Milanese armourers.

Nevertheless, some pieces were of Parisian make, though the craftsmen who had carried them out were natives of the Low Countries or of Italy. Among them was Pierre Golle, whom the cardinal had brought from Holland. Here is one of his works: "a cabinet in ebony, outlined with pewter, with five niches between fourteen little marble columns with capitals in gilt bronze. In the middle niche a figure of Cardinal Mazarin under a pavilion, and in the other four Minerva, Painting, Sculpture and Astrology, on a gallery with balusters, under four vases and two figures representing Might and Justice; and the King's arms over the pediment. This cabinet" is upheld "by a base of twelve *thermes* bronzed and gilt with the signs of the Zodiac." Others were Domenico Cucci, the wood carver, and Filippo Caffieri, the founder of his line, both summoned from Rome; and also

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the mosaic workers in hard stones and lapidary artists, Ferdinando and Orazio Migliorini, Giovanni Gacetti and Branchi, all Tuscans.

Foucquet also was a great connoisseur in fine things, but with a taste refined in a different sense from that of the Italian Mazarin. We know that Louis XIV and Colbert, where building was concerned, were only his imitators, since it was he who had managed, in order to give his château and park of Vaux-le-Vicomte a harmony of beauty then unique in the whole world,[1] to bring together artists like the architect Le Vau, the gardeners Le Nostre and La Quintinie, the sculptor Puget, and lastly, the painter Le Brun, to whom he had already entrusted a kind of supervision of all works carried out for him, and the management of a tapestry factory at Maincy. Vaux, says Sainte-Beuve, is a "Versailles in anticipation."

Mazarin dies, and the young king takes the "helm of the State" with a firm hand; at once Foucquet's amazing career crumbles to dust: the adder has overcome the squirrel.[2] Fully possessed of the idea that noble buildings are as essential for the renown of a great monarch as the triumphs of Bellona and dazzling love affairs,

1 We are not forgetting the royal château of Richelieu, now destroyed. But it appears certain that for unity and harmony of beauty, in spite of a certain piled-up heaviness that keeps Vaux from being an absolute masterpiece, taken together Foucquet's château and park surpassed Richelieu's.

2 It will be remembered that Foucquet's emblem was a squirrel (*fouquet* in old French) and Colbert's an adder (Latin *coluber*).

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and, besides, boldly encouraged in this path by Colbert, Louis XIV decides that art shall be one of the rays of his crown of glory, and takes into his own service *en bloc* all the artists that have worked for the first minister and for the Superintendent of Finance.[1]

And now begins the despotic sway of Le Brun that was to lie heavily for a quarter of a century upon all French art, for its good and for evil too. Colbert, who understood such things, had speedily discovered in him rare gifts as an organizer and a leader of men, and proposed him to the sovereign for a kind of State Secretary of Fine Arts. Now we see French art somewhat like a well regulated clock; the central spring moves a first wheel, which engages a second, and so on. . . . This hierarchy, too, is universally accepted and not merely imposed by force; Puget alone, in the depths of his native Provence, remains to some degree independent. Le Brun is made noble, he becomes sire de Thionville, then Chevalier of the Order of Saint Michel, First Painter to the King, Keeper of the Pictures and Drawings of the King's Cabinet, Life Chancellor and then Rector in perpetuity to the Academy of Painting, which gives him the government of "great art," and Director of the *Manufacture royale des*

1 To lose no time he does not hesitate even to buy furniture at the sale of Foucquet's effects. That is how the Louvre comes to possess a round table of gilded wood, upborne by figures of children, the last jetsam of the early splendours of Vaux-le-Vicomte. It shows quite pronounced Italian characteristics.

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Meubles de la couronne, that is to say, the Gobelins factory, which brings under his rod all the so-called "minor" arts.

He might very well say, "L'Art, c'est moi."

It must be quite roundly declared that there was no one besides Le Brun who deserved such a pile of honours and powers. In spite of his defects, which are serious—his colour is poor and vulgar, his drawing round and commonplace—he had very uncommon artistic gifts, and above all, the happy combination of an imagination sufficiently vigorous to achieve conceptions of vast scope and a talent for detail sufficient to realise them in the most meticulous perfection. He is the last of those universal artists, of which the Renaissance had known a few, capable of conceiving that enormous allegorical poem with innumerable strophes in painting, in gilded stucco, in marbles and bronzes, which the Mirror Gallery at Versailles is in reality, without thinking it beneath him to design a window hasp; sufficiently clever as a sculptor for such men as Coysevox and Girardon to find it natural to follow his directions, and not disdaining to arrange scenes for the theatre. "The intervals of spare times which he had to himself[1] he employed in training himself in all the talents that are related to the art of design, and extend into the domains of architecture, goldsmith's work, cabinet-making, and, in general, everything

1 Guillet de Saint-Georges in his *Mémoires inédits sur les membres de l'Académie de peinture.*

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that deals with what appertains to fine buildings." It is no mark of a mediocre spirit to have had so wide a conception of art.

Three periods can be distinguished in the duration of the Louis XIV style, and in this whole time there is a uniformity in art that is too complete; on the other hand, it is so closely attached to the royal person that it was inevitable that there should be three periods of evolution in the arts in general, just as there were three periods in the life of the monarch.

Under Mazarin, as we have said, there is a persistence of Flemish influence, but a preponderance of Italian taste; nearly all the artistic craftsmen are foreigners. This state of affairs cannot come to an end suddenly; it continues during the early days of Louis XIV's personal rule, the more naturally seeing that the taste of this young prince, "in the flower of his age and the full strength of his passions," is not yet very refined. It goes on almost till 1675; these are the days of Mlle. de La Vallière and the goodly "reign" of Mme. de Montespan, the days of the *carrousels*, ballets, masquerades, of unceasing fetes; the days when the Louvre works have been abandoned and the first buildings begin to rise at Versailles. This early Versailles was much less pompous and ceremonious than is often imagined. There were already in the park such sylvan diversions as the labyrinth with groups of lead figures, painted in natural colours and representing Aesop's fables; hydraulic diversions

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like the grotto of Tethys and its untimely jets to besprinkle unwary visitors, to the great glee of the initiate; the "royal island" or "island of love," in the midst of a pond, where the game is to get to it by skiff without being drenched under the arching jets of water that surround it; we see a "ramasse" or "roulette," a kind of switchback on which La Vallière's lover royally delights to make his timid mistress shriek with affright. All this is imitated from the gardens of Germany and Italy.

The sun climbs to the zenith; after this gay morning comes a resplendent noon of fifteen years. But above all, the years between the Peace of Nimuegen and the English revolution (1678-1688) are the triumphal years, in which the monarch of the lilies sees his apotheosis in his own lifetime. When, sitting on his solid silver throne with sixteen million livres in diamonds on his black justaucorps and his hat, he receives prostrate and humbled ambassadors at the end of his dazzling mirror gallery; when his coach crosses the Place des Victoires and he beholds the statue raised in his honour by Maréchal de la Feuillade between its never extinguished lanterns, can he not believe himself a god upon the earth? His taste is finally formed, henceforth he understands the grandeur of simplicity, he loves the reasonable. Let us take an example; the parterres with complicated meandering runnels of water have been replaced on the Versailles terraces with noble sheets of real

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mirror glass, whose great bare surface is so fine under the heaven they reflect. The trivial diversions of the park have been destroyed or abandoned. The Louis XIV art now reaches its perfect maturity, foreign elements are eliminated or transformed in so far as is possible when a Le Brun rules everything. "*Laissons*" Boileau has just said in his *Art Poétique*:—

"... laissons à l'Italie
De tous ces faux brillants l'éclatante folie."

The poison of decadent Italianism is still at work in painting, so much is certain, and to a considerable degree in architecture, although Hardouin-Mansart, First Architect to the King in 1676, is a good Frenchman; but sculpture is purged of it, if we except old Puget, and already the art of decoration is almost altogether national.

After 1690 comes decline and decay for the aging King. He has committed irreparable blunders, and punishment is beginning; the League of Augsburg, the Great Alliance of Vienna, the Great Alliance of the Hague, all Europe rises up against him. He has lost Colbert; after Colbert, Louvois, and after Louvois, Chamillart! He has lost Condé, Turenne and Luxembourg; his armies have now leaders like Tallard, la Feuillade, Villeroy. His couriers riding on the spur from the North or from the South now bring only tidings of disaster: defeat at Turin, reverse in Spain, rout at Ramillies, the loss of Lille ... till Villars

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saves France and honour. Within this realm attacked on every hand are famine and civil war. The treasury is empty. Death strikes and strikes again into the royal family: will a bastard have to be set on the throne of Saint-Louis? After radiant Montespan comes Maintenon, the prudish, cold-blooded Maintenon, the disillusioned, the eternally bored. While she plies her needle and yawns, tucked away in her famous niche, Louis sits in the opposite chimney-corner, with his gouty leg stretched out on a folding stool, and preserves a sullen silence. He suffers from his decayed teeth, his swollen foot; he has slept badly, for the bugs have harried him all night in his hundred-thousand-crown bed; vapours darken his brain, for in spite of Fagon he has once again eaten too many green peas. And he broods upon his violated frontiers. The Court is hanging about idly in attendance—gone are the days of fêtes lit by five thousand wax tapers . . . and it seeks distraction as it can. There is at the end of this reign an odd mixture of grossly flaunted cynicism and pretended religion. Princesses smoke pipes borrowed from the guardsmen on duty, and give themselves up to bouts of excessive drinking, whose consequences need to be shrouded up in darkness; but the shadow of M. Tartuffe haunts the porch of the new chapel.

Meanwhile French art pursues its destined path of glory. Its orbit for a moment has coincided with that of the Sun-King, but does not

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go with him in his setting. The tyrant Le Brun dies in 1690; old Mignard, his mortal foe, takes his place only to die in his turn four years later. It is possible to breathe freely, to grow emancipated. The war between "Poussinistes" and "Rubénistes" finally ended in the victory of the partisans of colour, just as in the world of letters the quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns ended in the victory of Perrault and Fontenelle. Rome still keeps her prestige, but is no longer in artists' eyes the holy city outside which is no salvation; here also breathes the Gallic spirit—Rigaud and Largillière have nothing ultramontane about them. That delicious *Susannah in the Bath* by Santerre, how purely French it is! François Desportes, his dogs and his game, are full of the richest and most living realism. We see a Tournières revive genre painting in the Dutch manner, a Gillot, painter of burlesque themes, farces, caprices and "grotesques," sets Harlequin, Mezzetin and Silvia gaily a-frisk. In 1699 Bon Boulogne hangs in the exhibition of the Académie de peinture a *Sacrifice of Iphigenia* as a matter of form, but also a *Jeune fille cherchant les puces à une autre!* These two girls seem to us to close the age of Poussin and Le Brun in a highly piquant fashion.

The King is no longer the artists' sole client. He hardly commissions anything now, for he is poor. Oh, yes: he is commissioning "paintings to cover the nude figures on the Gobelins

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tapestries." The Gobelins factory is even closed for several years from 1694; the high-warp weavers enlist in the armies. The world of the arts is working for others now: for the Duc de Chartres and the Duc d'Orleans, who most certainly have different tastes from the king, and for private persons, financial magnates like La Live and Crozat, great lords like the Rohan-Soubises; for plain business folk, who are building themselves comfortable houses with small rooms, less formal and more convenient, while the old sovereign shivers with cold as he daily continues, heroically imperturbable, to play the tragi-comedy of the *lever* in his chamber no less icy-cold than magnificent. The times have brought a revolution: the Louis XIV art rapidly crumbled away in the concluding years of the century, and the art of the Regency began, considerably before the Regency itself arrived.

But let us come back to our furniture. The manufactory of the Gobelins was founded in 1662 and definitely organised in 1667 under the title of *Manufacture royale des Meubles de la couronne*. It was planned to produce many things besides tapestries; the establishment on the banks of the Bièvre was to be filled with "good painters, master high-warp weavers, goldsmiths, founders, engravers, lapidaries, cabinet-makers in ebony and other woods, dyers and other good craftsmen in every kind of art and craft." A vast programme indeed!

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The painters, who numbered more than thirty at the same time, included Van der Meulen, and Houasse, and Monnoyer, Michel Corneille, Nocret, Bon Boulogne. Not only had they to make cartoons and models, but also to carry out the painted silks (most often on *gros de Tours*) which were among the styles of hangings most eagerly sought after, the sculptors, Coysevox, Tubi, Slodtz and others, made vases to adorn parks, trophies of gilded bronze and various internal ornaments for the palaces; Caffieri, Cucci, Lespagnandelle, all wood workers, carved in oak, walnut and lime the wooden parts of seats and tables, guéridons, pedestals, balustrades, doors, frames for pictures and for mirrors; the engravers, Leclere, Audran, Bérain, Le Pautre, produced their collections of designs for ornaments; the lapidaries, at first the Italians who had worked for Mazarin, and then their French pupils, put together pavements and facings of marble, and the tops of tables; the goldsmiths, Loir, Merlin, de Villers, hammered and chased not only gold nefs, plate, table utensils, but furniture of every kind: cabinets, consoles and guéridons, benches and stools, chandeliers, flower pots for orange trees, dogs for fireplaces. . . . This is the furniture, of Babylonian luxury, and let us venture to say, of very doubtful taste, that adorned the Mirror Gallery, the *Grands Appartements*, the Queen's *Appartement* and the King's Chamber. The cabinet-makers, Pierre Poitou, Foulon, Harmant,

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made cabinets, under-cupboards, cabinets for medals, tables, bureaux, parquet flooring, and marquetry clock cases. Lastly, two hundred and fifty weavers, mostly Flemish at the outset, produced those admirable tapestry sets, the *Acts of the Apostles*, the *History of the King*, the *Battles of Alexander*, the *Royal Residences*, and a score of others after Raphael, Le Brun, Van der Meulen, Noel Coypel, etc.

These efforts of so many various artists were never scattered, but always co-ordinated for the achieving of a common task by the strong hands of Charles Le Brun. The King's First Painter received the title of Director of the Factory, as being "a person capable and intelligent in the art of painting, to make the designs for tapestry, sculpture and other works, to cause them to be correctly carried out, and to have the general direction and supervision over all the workers to be employed in these manufactures." To make sure of the supply of craftsmen there was organised, for sixty children under the king's protection, "the Director's seminary, to which there shall be appointed a master painter under him, who shall take order for their education and instruction, to be distributed afterwards by the director and by him placed in apprenticeship with the masters of each art and craft, according as he shall deem them fit and capable." Such were the admirable methods placed in Le Brun's hands by Colbert, and no less admirable was the use he made of them. There it was that the

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Louis XIV style was elaborated, with an imposing unity. The assimilation, or if it can be said, the "Frenchifying" of the foreign workers of the early days came to pass with incredible rapidity, but this same phenomenon has taken place among us in every period: in the fifteenth century, when we borrowed the flamboyant style from England; in the sixteenth century, when from Italian elements we created our Renaissance style, which is so completely national; and in the eighteenth century, when so many German cabinet-makers, the Oebens, the Rieseners, the Roentgens, so speedily became French of the French!

What remains now out of the huge and marvellous output of the Gobelins factory between 1662 and 1690? Beyond the permanent decoration of Versailles—a great part of which was destroyed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—and tapestries, already very scarce, there is hardly anything; a few tables of stone mosaic, and a few frames of carved and gilded wood on the pictures in the Louvre that once belonged to the King's collection. It would be hard to imagine a more complete shipwreck. Happily, we have some excellent authorities to give us approximate information as to this varied output. There are prints representing views of the interior of Versailles, and better still, tapestries showing the *History of the King*, in particular one of the finest, which commemorates a visit paid by Louis XIV to the Gobelins. Le

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Brun has even brought silver vases chased at the factory from his designs into his *Entry of Alexander into Babylon.*

On the other hand, the General Inventories of the Furniture belonging to the Crown may give us a fairly exact idea of what the factory turned out. The tables were nearly all mosaic pictures inlaid in black *parangon*,[1] set on their *pied* or underpart of gilded wood with heavily emphasised carvings: these were decorative compositions of rosettes, *rinceaux*, festoons, etc., but also very frequently irregular scatterings of flowers, fruits, birds, caterpillars and butterflies in their natural colours, with rather childish attempts to trick the eye into believing them real, and even horrors such as can still be seen in the museums of Florence—a table decorated with a pack of cards flung down at random.

Cabinets, when the factory started, were all like those of Mazarin, complicated, elaborate, rich to excess, loud with many colours, each one seeming rather a mineralogical collection than a work of art. Here is an example of the result of the collaboration of lapidary and cabinet-maker: "a cabinet of ebony with two large handles of gilt brass at the sides, embellished in front with three porticoes between four columns of German jasper, their bases and capitals of agate, also German, the middle portico with four little columns of Oriental jasper, and the two on the

1 Black basalt, which is nothing else than the touchstone of jewellers.

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two sides of the same Oriental jasper, all with bases and capitals of gold, the front of the said cabinet covered with pictures of stone mosaic work representing landscapes, and enriched with several little ornaments of gold and enamel." Seven different materials, without counting the various minerals making up the "pictures." When cabinet-maker, goldsmith and lapidary pooled all the resources of their arts, the royal furniture was enriched with "a cabinet in the shape of a tomb, covered with a leaf of silver, made up of twenty drawers enriched with agate, jasper, lapis lazuli, cornelian, cameos and other precious stones; in the middle, in front, a door of one single agate, between two columns also of agate, with their bases and capitals of silver gilt. The said cabinet standing on four silver spheres." The table intended to carry this cabinet of goldsmithery was "lacquered after the fashion of porphyry." What a beauty it must have been!

These cabinets were fairly soon out of fashion; banished from the royal apartments, they were stranded in natural history collections. The Gobelins then made pieces that were much less Italian and much more austere, cabinets of cedar, partially gilt and with ornaments of gilt bronze; of Brazil wood with compartments outlined in ivory; and above all, pieces of every kind in marquetry of tortoise-shell, pewter and brass, with ornaments of chased and gilt bronze, after the manner of Boulle. The same good fortune fell to this prince of cabinet-makers as had been

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the lot of the Clouets among the painters of the previous century, namely, that as he never signed his work, many pieces are unquestionably ascribed to him that were never made by him, but by cabinet-makers at the Gobelins or elsewhere who employed the same technique.

These magnificent pieces are, it is true, outside the modest scope of the present book; but as they have always been and still are looked upon as the supreme expression of the Louis XIV style, we cannot refrain from speaking of André-Charles Boulle.

Like so many others he was of foreign extraction, but the assimilation was already complete among the Boulles for two generations back when he was born, in 1642, "in the galleries of the Louvre." His grandfather, a furniture-maker of Neufchatel, and a Calvinist, had been brought from Switzerland by Henri IV and given an abode in the great "waterside gallery" that joined the palace of the Louvre to the palace of the Tuileries. This privilege was to be continued to the family for five generations; André-Charles obtained it in 1672. Divided into little lodgings, the great gallery was peopled by artists of every kind, painters, sculptors, goldsmiths, enamellers, down to the "fourbisseurs," who hammered out pieces of armour there. These privileged people, who lived there with their families in the closest clannishness, and often married among themselves, had the title of purveyors to the king and escaped the very strict regulations of mastership

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in their crafts, not a very good thing for the technical quality of their work. They were directly amenable to the *Surintendance des Batiments*. That is how Boulle was always independent of Le Brun, which did not prevent him from feeling, like everyone else, the influence of that powerful personality. Boulle also was a complete artist all round: we find him described as "architect, painter and sculptor in mosaic, cabinet-maker, chaser and inlayer to the King," and again, in another document, as "designer of monograms and master in ordinary of the seals to the King."

Boulle, rather like Rembrandt, was incapable of combating his passion for collecting, and in spite of the large sums he earned (up to fifty thousand livres, we are told, for a cabinet), he lived always in embarrassment and plagued by law-suits. To crown his misfortunes, when he was nearly eighty years old he had the agony of seeing his admirable collections disappear in a fire, which at the same time devoured all the furniture both finished and in the making that was in his shop and his workrooms. There is preserved a petition he addressed to the king after this disaster, in which he sets down his losses at three hundred thousand livres. He had forty-eight drawings by Raphael, a priceless manuscript by Rubens containing his notes on his travels in Italy and remarks on painting, pictures by Corregio, Snyders, Le Sueur, Mignard and Le Brun; an important collection of engravings,

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including a complete set of Albert Dürer; bronzes by Michel Angelo, three thousand rare medals; he was a connoisseur of the very highest taste.

But we must not make Boulle out to be the only cabinet-maker of his time. He did not invent the style that has been given his name; several collaborators helped him with his bronzes: Domenico Cucci, the great goldsmith Claude Ballin, the sculptors Van Opstal, Warin, Girardon, who supplied him with models in wax and in plaster. His arabesques and *rinceaux* are often clearly copied from Bérain. His special merit seems to have been that of a clever manipulator of elements he had not invented for himself. He was unrivalled for his skill in wedding reliefs in gilt bronze to marquetry backgrounds to achieve perfect harmony, and in giving his furniture, especially his cupboards, noble, austere, and dignified architectural shapes, which make magnificent decorative pieces of them, worthy to play a leading part in the grandiose conceptions of Charles le Brun. But they are merely decorations, and we must not try to find anything else in them. Their outside is the best part of them. Under their dazzling finery and within their masterly lines these pieces of furniture are as ill constructed as the façade plastered on to the Louvre by Charles Perrault. The ornamentation is not the accompaniment of the shape, but determines it. Here too often lies the fault of this Louis XIV art: magnificent exteriors masking

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hollow sham. "Handsome head . . . but no brain inside," said La Fontaine's fox.

The Boulle pieces that are genuinely by André-Charles are as scarce as Clouets by Janet and Francois. His four sons, cabinet-makers like their father, imitated him to the best of their ability, and later still, towards the end of the eighteenth century, the cabinet-makers Georges Jacob and Philippe Montigny made excellent imitations with bronzes cast from his models. These imitations are hard to distinguish from the originals when they are not signed. We may add that this kind of marquetry is so far from solid that the real genuine Boulle pieces have had to be almost entirely remade.

In short, in founding the Gobelins and othe factories and favouring the artists of the galler of the Louvre, it was Louis XIV's intention to furnish his royal abodes with such magnificence that they should be worthy of "the greatest monarch of the universe." Colbert's aim, in advising him to take these measures, was to establish within the borders of the realm, or to bring to perfection, luxury industries so that the French, in the first place, would no longer be forced to buy their tapestries, fine furniture, rich stuffs, plate glass and the like from foreign countries; and that they might in time compete beyond their own frontiers with the workshops of Italy, the Low Countries, Spain and Germany. Both the King and Colbert achieved their end, for towards the middle of the reign France no

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longer in any way paid tribute to foreigners where the arts pertaining to furnishing were concerned. It was the very utmost if a few caned seats were brought in from Holland.

Within a few years space—from 1674 to 1686—the Château de Clagny is built, decorated, and furnished for Madame de Montespan; the Versailles of Le Vau is enlarged, under the supervision of Jules Hardouin-Mansart, by the Mirror Gallery, the two wings of the Ministers, the huge North and South wings. This colossal palace is speedily decorated and furnished; at the same time the modest "porcelain" Trianon[1] is knocked down, and its place taken by the great Trianon of pink marble, and this also is decorated and furnished immediately. Marly is begun in 1679, finished, decorated and furnished in 1686; the King's impatience brooks no delay. The craftsmen are equal to everything. And we say nothing of Saint Cloud, built, decorated and furnished for Monsieur, nor of the other royal houses whose furnishings are completely renewed.

This example is followed everywhere, once the first impetus is given. Châteaux and town houses, old and new, are filled with beds, arm-chairs, cupboards and tables in the new fashion; when the King has finished furnishing and decreased his commissions the royal factories will be idle, but innumerable joiners, cabinet-makers

1 In reality faced with blue and white faience "in the fashion of the wares of China."

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and tapestry weavers will go on turning out for private persons furniture in the same style, and will presently invent new kinds to satisfy new wants, devising fresh shapes to suit their taste, in harmony with the new architecture.

Just at the moment when the King's influence over the furnishing arts begins to be eclipsed a rapid and profound change takes place in manners. It cannot be said that social life loses its importance, the contrary is true, indeed; but alongside of it home life, which had been wholly sacrificed to it, takes on an increasing importance. People want their ease and comforts, to suffer less from cold, to be able to seclude themselves from their train of domestics and from troublesome outsiders, to be able to go conveniently from one part of the house to another, to find at meal times their table prepared in a room devoted to the purpose. It appears that all at once a host of new wants are discovered which nobody had ever thought of before. People have a town flat, a château or simple country villa no longer merely to display to their friends a sumptuousness conferring prestige, but also in order to live pleasantly in them. Anyone about to build no longer demands from his architect above everything a suite of large pompous halls, whose long vista with all doors open may give visitors the illusion of a gallery in a palace, and off which the cabinets and little rooms in which the household will live their ordinary life are to be dumped as best they can. He now wants instead rooms fit

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to live in, adapted each to its own use, well warmed, well equipped with outlets and conveniences, in a word, rooms that shall be on an ordinary human scale instead of seeming to be made for a race of giants. The French people will still wait a long time before they recapture from the English their own good old word *confort*, but in default of the name they are beginning to have the substance. This same range of wants will bring wainscoting to the walls, wooden floors for underfoot, smaller fireplaces, surmounted with mirrors, more perfection in joinery and wrought ironwork, and also an equivalent transformation in furniture.

This progressive transformation is the mark of the passing from the Louis XIV style to the Louis XV style. The Regency style in all strictness has no more real existence than the Directoire style, but it is convenient to have a name for furniture that still retains certain characteristics of the Louis XIV period, and already shows some that belong to the Louis XV period. But it must be clearly realised that the duration of this time of transition does not coincide with that of the government of Philippe d'Orléans. His regency lasted for eight years (1715 to 1723); but it may be said that if, on the one hand, the Louis XV style is already in existence in 1723, on the other hand the Regency style—if there *is* a Regency style—did not wait for the death of the aged Louis XIV to be completely established. Louis the Great lived too

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long, and survived many men and many things, his style as well as his greatness itself.

Let us, to be precise, set up a parallel of a few dates. In 1711 Gillot succeeds Bérain as designer of scenery and costumes to the Opera; in 1712 one of his pupils, a young Fleming of twenty-eight, who spends his days in the younger Crozat's picture gallery intoxicating himself with the colour of Rubens and Veronese, and who paints scenes of soldier life or scenes from the *Comédie Italienne*, this young man is "received" into the Royal Academy of Painting. His name is Antoine Watteau. Out of the thirty-seven years of life doled out to him he is to spend thirty-one in the reign of Louis XIV. And it is in 1710 that Robert de Cotte finishes the Chapel of Versailles; in 1710 Germain Boffrand begins the decoration of the hôtel Soubise, the finest and most typical ornamental work of the Regency style, and one of the most admirable in the whole range of French art.

On the death of Louis XIV the court scatters in haste, and the boy king is removed from Versailles. The Regent is intelligent, humane, generous, as brave as a sword blade, but wholly possessed by idleness and debauchery. Every kind of hypocrisy flings away its mask, and with such vicious men as the Duke Philippe d'Orléans and his former tutor Abbe Dubois governing the realm, everyone indulges himself to his heart's content. To the devil with majesty, gravity and virtue, those played out old hags! Pleasure

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is god, and the bacchanalian orgy of the Regency is soon in full swing. To be truthful, of course it is not everybody that in the race for pleasure shows the same animal grossness of a Parabère, a Duchesse de Berry or her father the Regent. There are refined and elegant voluptuaries and poets like Watteau, who transfigures pleasure by bathing it in a delicate mist of beauty and dream; but there was at the moment, by way of reaction, an hour of drunken orgy that few escaped.[1] That century of the suavity and elegance of living had its wild youth between fifteen and twenty-five. It had this wild youth in the domain of art as well as in that of manners, and this was the vogue of the *rocaille* style, which is, so to say, merely an eccentric part of the Regency style. We discuss it elsewhere;[2] suffice it here to observe that the two artists who most of all exemplify "Rocaille" in its most violent form were of foreign blood: Gilles-Marie Oppenord, from the Netherlands, and Juste-Aurèle Meissonier, a native of Turin.

Along with Boffrand, the most remarkable architect of the period is Robert de Cotte, the brother-in-law, disciple and continuator of Jules Hardouin-Mansart, the creator of the admirable episcopal palace of Strasbourg. He is a charming artist, of an elegance wholly French, Attic, and measured, who preserves just the right

1 It is unnecessary to say that we are speaking here only of that infinitesimal part of the nation that made up the aristocracy of birth and wealth.

2 In *French Furniture under Louis XV.*

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amount of the nobleness of the Louis XIV manner. Starting with 1699, he was "*intendant* and general supervisor of buildings, gardens, arts and manufactories to the King." Unfortunately the factories, especially the Gobelins, were then fallen on evil days. Robert de Cotte has left exquisite models for furniture in his collection of designs,[1] but no actual piece has come down to us.

The cabinet-maker *par excellence* of this period was Charles Cressent. He sums up the furniture of the Regency just as Boulle did that of Louis XIV. He was a Frenchman of unmixed descent, born at Amiens in 1685, the son of a sculptor who remained in the provinces and the grandson of a master joiner of Picardy. He himself was both sculptor and cabinet-maker, as capable of making the wax models for his bronzes as of designing his furniture as a whole, of planning their construction and veneering them with costly woods. Cressent brought a new element of colour into cabinet-making; the moment had come when the Compagnie des Indes was beginning to import oversea woods of warm hues; the funereal ebony was abandoned, but we had not yet reached the light gaiety of rosewood and the rich dark ruddy glow of mahogany. Cressent's favourite combination is still austere; it consists of amaranth wood in "fern-leaf" veneer and enframed with violet-wood. On this background the ormolu bronze shows up superbly, with more suaveness than on the ebony of the Boulles.

1 They have never been engraved.

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Charles Cressent had several manners. In certain of his pieces he displays himself more as a sculptor than as a cabinet-maker; in these the bronzes assume an exaggerated importance, covering almost half the surface and standing out in high relief, almost a little turgidly; but what admirable chasing, rich and sinewy at the same time, broad or concise at need, and always free, easy and full of life and intelligence. At other times he drew inspiration from the light grace of Bérain or Gillot or Watteau, and placed on a ground of satinwood certain amusing "monkey-pieces" in framings of always perfectly balanced curves. But his most perfect works were certain flat bureaux, very sober and austere, with lines of impeccable purity, masses balanced to perfection, and their bronzes proportioned and distributed with marvellous instinct and tact. The most important of these bronzes are found at the top of the legs, under the rounded angles of the flat top of the bureau, those busts of female figures that were called *espagnolettes*; their dainty charm makes them sisters to Watteau's most piquant child-women, but they are untouched by the slightest meanness or triviality. An exquisite profile, a bosom barely repressed by the pointed bodice, a tiny toque—'tis Silvia, 'tis Miranda, 'tis Columbine or Rosalind. Italian names, but the women so French! Between these bureaux and those of Boulle there is no real essential difference; but how much more developed is Cressent's sense of line, of the

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beautiful curve! Beside him Boulle is massive and lacking in grace, but Cressent's gracefulness does not exclude nobility. These pieces in some sort epitomise all the qualities of the two periods; they are perhaps the supreme flower of French taste.

Now the task is accomplished, and the last traces of Italian or German influence have disappeared from French furniture. The great national tradition is re-established. Let us widen our horizon; henceforth Italy has lost her artistic supremacy, won by France in high conflict, in every province of art, and to be held for a long period. Now all the peoples of Europe must turn to us when they are fain to embellish the setting of their lives. The great Colbert must needs be well content in his tomb at Saint-Eustache.

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SECOND PART
THE LOUIS XIV STYLE

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PART TWO
THE LOUIS XIV STYLE

CHAPTER ONE: CHARACTERISTICS AND TECHNIQUE OF THE STYLE

One must needs regret when one has to speak of the Louis XIV style that our language lacks the richness of Italian, which can add to the simple meaning of a word the notion of greatness by merely clapping the termination *one* on to it. Is it not more expressive, in talking of Versailles, to say, *uno grandissimo palazzone* than "an enormous palace"? And is not *seggiolone* marvellously adapted to signify a huge and imposing arm-chair of gilded wood in this style? The most usual and most striking characteristic of this style is, in fact, greatness, and first of all in the root meaning of the word, for in this period, so much in love with greatness in everything, when men seemed to seek to increase even their stature, like the actors of antiquity, above by means of the big peruke with curls arranged in stages, and below by means of their high red heels, a table was much bigger

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than it needed to be, with overgrown legs joined by over-massive cross-pieces; an arm-chair was too tall on its legs, nearly big enough for two, and its back of excessive height, unless we take it that that vast rectangle's only function was to act as background to those huge perukes invented by the Sieur Binet and called after him *binettes*, or else for those lofty erections of lace and ribbon, known as *fontanges*, that crowned the heads of ladies.

But this furniture has another greatness of a less material kind, what Louis XIV had in his mind's eye when he used to say, "That has something great . . . that touches greatnesss" . . . the highest praise he could bestow: the grandeur that comes from ample, spacious lines, not always simple, but nearly always architectural, from masses solidly placed, from plain surfaces on which a rich flat decoration could unfold itself without break or impediment. This greatness is power, it is nobility. With no play on words, this Louis XIV style is a style as noble as that of our great classical writers. Unfortunately, the phrase "noble style" brings with it also an unfavourable turn, as when, for instance, we speak of Despréaux' *Ode sur la prise de Namur*. All Louis XIV art, Le Brun art, is of this kind of nobility; there was never found the man of genius who could have brought it to the pitch of perfection reached by Racine's poetry and Bossuet's prose. In architecture, in painting, in the decorative arts, the style of the period always

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has something rhetorical and hollow. It is too much a question of *façade*; does this derive from its Italian origins? There is a very striking resemblance, in their respective scales, between an Italian church façade cased with marbles, whose lines and divisions have no relation to the architecture upon which it is fastened, and the façade of a Boulle cupboard, a rich casing of many-coloured and incongruous materials hiding a framework of deal—and pretty badly put together at that—whose exact structure escapes us. On the other hand, in a Gothic façade, the ornamentation is infallibly incorporated with the structure and serves to make it manifest; in a French dresser of the fifteenth century the framework provides both the basis and the first elements of the decoration. Claude Perrault's façade of the Louvre, or that by Salomon de Brosses at Saint-Gervais, and that of the Boulle cupboard are, properly speaking, deceptions, lies; the front of Notre-Dame and a dresser of the time of Charles VIII are sincerity itself. Let us add that less ambitious cupboards, such as the ones reproduced here, pieces in the tradition of pure joinery, also show this splendid sincerity with their bold mouldings that so clearly display their actual architecture.

Louis XIV furniture of the costliest type seems ashamed of even the very scanty usefulness it possesses; it does all it can to hide it. In the same way Claude Perrault's Louvre would blush to display roofs or chimneys or gutters. As much

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as possible they give themselves the air of blocks, of monolithic pedestals—it is more "noble." So too the same Perrault declared, "it is a great beauty in a building to appear as though made of a single stone, the joinings being invisible." There you have it, the detestable doctrine of lying.

The Louis XIV style is sumptuous. It is fain to strike and to impose itself rather than to please, less to charm than to astonish. Sometimes it has a heavy and fatiguing stateliness. But we must not carry this criticism too far; it could relax and smile too. The "Porcelain Trianon" was anything but stately, with its blue and white vases bristling along the lines of its roof, and its "various birds done in natural colours." The grandson of Henri IV was too fond of women not to oblige his academic artists to make all proper concessions to feminine taste. At Versailles may be read a page of one of Mansart's reports, in the margin of which the master has written as follows: "It seems to me that something ought to be altered, that the subjects are too serious, and that there must be something of youth mingled with what is to be done. You are to bring me sketches when you come, or at any rate ideas. There must be something of childhood diffused everywhere." And in fact, in the decorations of Versailles children shed their gaiety everywhere, from the *Salle de l'Oeil-de-Bœuf*, where they are gambolling like kids all along the cornice, to the

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garden of the Grand Trianon, where they prance so merrily in the water, passing through the Southern parterre, where grave Sphinxes allow themselves to be unceremoniously bestridden by them, and by the ponds of the Seasons, where they are sporting with the gods.

But there must have been a pleasant contrast with the Olympian pomp of the *Grands Appartements* in the Chinese objects that were everywhere to be seen in them. Without the actual inventories it would be impossible to believe to what extent the contemporaries of the Great King delighted in everything that came out of China. We have seen that Boileau shared in this universal craze. In every royal house there were *emmeublements*—a bed complete, arm-chairs, folding stools, hassocks, and wall hangings —in white satin or white taffeta, "embroidered and covered on both sides with flowers, figures, animals, and other things from China, in various colours." The Kings's own chamber was "emmeublée"[1] in this fashion at the moment when the four friends, Racine, Boileau, Chapelle and La Fontaine, in 1668, paid a visit to Versailles, which La Fontaine has so delightfully described for us. "Among other beauties, they paused a long time to look at the bed, the tapestry and the chairs with which the King's chamber and cabinet have been furnished : it is a Chinese stuff, full of figures embodying the whole religion of that country. For want of a

1 It was a summer set of furniture.

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Brahmin[1] our four friends understood it not at all." And this "dressing gown of white satin, embellished with Chinese embroidery, lined with green taffeta," is neither more nor less than Louis XIV's own dressing gown. "Chinese stuff, a gold ground sprinkled with large leaves and plants, from which spring branches of flowers with birds and butterflies . . . blue Chinese gauze, sprinkled with flowers in gold and silk . . . Chinese gauze amaranth or dried rose colour . . . Chinese stuff of flame colour . . . Chinese stuff, silk, of violet ground sprinkled and filled with flowers painted in divers colours . . ." all the dream stuffs that China wove, embroidered, and painted in the days of the first Ts'ings, shimmer in every page of the old inventories of the Crown furniture.

The Mercuries and Apollos that filled the ceilings above the great gold and marble salons saw beneath them things still more suprising. Here, a "black carpet with Chinese lettering edged with a band of yellow, with little flowers in embroidery"; there a lacquer cabinet on which geese are flying and rabbits browsing—animals far from noble; another on which they perceive "a kind of monster with all four legs in the air";[2] and lastly, everywhere on the most majestic tables of mosaic work, on the *scabellons* *

1 A Brahmin as a Chinese priest! La Fontaine does not go into the matter so closely; besides, Persia, China, India, Japan were all one for the Westerns of this age.

2 The dragon of Fô, doubtless.

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of Boulle, and the gilded consoles of Cucci, *pagodes* everywhere. That was the name given to those little figures of every kind of material, imported from China or from India, which were chosen for their oddity, and over which everybody went crazy: Pou-Tai, obese and laughing on his sack of rice; Sakya-Muni meditating on his lotus-blossom; Lao-Tse with enormous forehead sitting on his buffalo; "an old man huddled up on a stork," or "a beggar leaning against a gallows." But what must have made Alcides drop his club out of his hands with astonishment, was to see one day a Chinese cabinet make its appearance, "to which his Majesty has had ten silver plaques fastened representing the labours of Hercules." This singular combination gives us quite new side-lights on the taste of the monarch.

What was there not to be found in that Versailles, which we are wrong in thinking of as all solemn state, and consequently in all the elegant interiors that prided themselves in resembling Versailles? "One hundred and seventy-one bouquets of various kinds of flowers . . . made with one single roll of silk cords . . . 515 little grotesque figures made, like the flowers, of rolled twist . . . 28 other larger figures of pasteboard and dressed in Indian robes of gold and silver and silk brocade" . . . table-tops entirely made of shells and cement . . . spinning wheels with their *travoils*[1] in the apartments of

1 Winders for the thread.

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princesses, for in these days princesses span and poetesses sang of their distaffs:—

Quenouille, mon souci, je vous promets et jure
De vous aimer toujours, et ne jamais changer
Votre honneur domestique en un bien étranger.

In the alcoves, just as in the rooms of girls to-day, might be seen little whatnots on which there were ranged knick-knacks of the most heterogeneous kind: a knife-grinder with his cart, made of silver filigree; a stag of blown glass; a coral tree; a doll's house. There might be seen, put up on the chimney-pieces, paper hand screens, upon which were engraved the far from edifying "Delights of the French soldier"; innumerable bouquets of artificial flowers in porcelain vases, "three thousand and thirty-one bouquets of flowers of various colours made of pleated silk gauze": round tables made of glass; and even *boules de jardin*, "phials of glass tinned inside, mounted on feet, placed on the mantelshelf to reflect in miniature the objects contained in the room"!

But there was one ornament for walls and mantelpieces, even in the state-rooms, that had an unheard of vogue. This was porcelain, either Chinese porcelain or its imitation in "Dutch porcelain," that is to say, Delft faïence. One must see certain prints by Daniel Marot or Le Pautre to realise to what heights this craze could be carried. Here is a chimney-piece carrying at each end of its shelf a large vase in shape of a horn and a bottle; in the middle, on a whatnot

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with four diminishing shelves, rises a pyramid of twenty-two pieces of porcelain. This way of decorating chimney-pieces had become so habitual that d'Aviler in his *Traité d'Architecture* wrote: "The height of a chimney-shelf should be six feet, so as to prevent the vases that may be arranged on it from being knocked over." And we know from childhood, since we read it in *Riquet à la Houppe*, how the stupidity of a princess of those days showed itself. "She either made no answer to what she was asked, or said something stupid. And she was so clumsy to boot, that she could not have ranged four bits of china on a chimney-shelf without breaking one of them, nor drunk a glass of water without spilling half of it over her clothes." In rooms decorated after the Chinese style it went further still. Cups alternately with saucers standing on edge, on tiny brackets or shelves, enframed panels lacquered in the Chinese fashion; others were ranged over the lintels of the doors; all the lines of a chimney-piece were laid out with them; one such chimney-piece was adorned with more than two hundred and twenty bits of china. Did not the Duc d'Aumont, if Saint-Simon may be believed, even take it into his head one day to have a cornice run all round his stable, which he covered with rare pieces of porcelain?

It is perhaps worth while to lay stress on this counterpart to the majestic decorative art inspired by Le Brun, for we are too much accustomed to judge from the dead and empty halls of unused

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and ravaged palaces, or from pieces of furniture displayed in isolation in museums and collections. Now that we have a comprehensive idea of our style, and of the atmosphere, so to say, in which it was shaped, we shall endeavour to analyse more precisely its distinguishing characteristics, considering more especially furniture of the less elaborate kinds.[1]

The Louis XIV style, perhaps chiefly because it had an eye on economy, abused the straight line in furniture. The style that came after did not avoid straight lines, it even emphasises them by a multiplication of parallels, with a slightly tiresome insistence, for example, in cupboards with large horizontal cornices.[2] In any case they are not detracted from and broken by a host of artifices, as they will be in the Louis XV style, where this later style consents to retain them. These straight lines sometimes give a certain impression of dryness,[3] but on the whole this is much less frequent than in the Louis XIII or the Empire style.

Curved lines were also very much employed, even before the style began to incline to the Regency lines. The Louis XIV curve is simple, firm and concise, with short radius; it never shows that species of loosened languor, so to say,

1 A great number of Louis XIV motives continued to be used in the Regency period, and we shall accordingly borrow in this chapter examples from the furniture of the succeeding period.

2 See the cupboards in Figs. 4 and 7, and especially in Fig. 9.

3 See the stretchers of the table in Fig. 23, and also the stretcher of the arm-chair in Fig. 35.

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which gives so much charm to the long curves of the Louis XV style. The table in Fig. 22 is wholly typical in this respect. Except in its rectangular top it does not present a single straight line. We must needs recognise that in this example the line is confused, too much broken up into short curves, and that this gives an effect of heaviness. The most successful pieces of this period offer a very harmonious combination of straight lines and curves, from which there results a sturdy firmness that does not prevent elegance.[1]

Right angles are not often evaded or softened ?[2] Like the regular courses in a wall of well squared cut stone, they express ideas of security, solidity, preciseness, of abstract reason also; here we may perceive the sign of the "geometrical spirit" of which Pascal spoke. Boileau had a mind full of right angles, Descartes also, and Corneille, and the great Arnauld, and Poussin too. Look at Poussin's portrait of himself in the Louvre; was it by mere chance that the background is cut up by several right angles?

These perpendiculars form the boundaries of panels, which others still subdivide into smaller panels; and this is another characteristic feature of an epoch that loves clearly defined limits,

1 Good examples of this harmony may be seen in the wood panels in Figs. 1 and 2, the cupboard in Fig. 6, the arm-chair of Fig. 32, the commode in Fig. 19, and above all the magnificent cupboard of Fig. 10 and the very handsome table of Fig. 21.

2 See the numerous right angles in the cupboards of Figs. 4, 5, 6, the arm-chair of Fig. 32, etc., etc.

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equal subdivisions, tragedies whose five acts never overlap one another, alexandrines without carry-over, strongly divided at each hemistich and moving two by two "like oxen," discourses in three clearly marked and defined heads, all equally developed and separated by unmistakable transitions. This subdivision into panels, "compartments" as they were called, is often a complete decoration in itself.

The panel in its early shape is a simple rectangle with a plain surface; the "diamond point" decoration of the Louis XIII style is done away with.[1] An early enrichment consists in hollowing out the four angles;[2] often the hollowed space is decorated with a motive carved in relief, a little rosette or the like.[3] Sometimes the panel is only hollowed at the top corners.[4]

Next comes the panel with semicircular top, the diameter of the curve of the semicircle being less than the side of the rectangle to which it is applied,[5] which gives a semicircle, the diameter of which is produced both ways in two straight lines. The four right angles of the panel remain. This is, especially in joiners' work, one of the fundamental and most characteristic shapes of the style, and is found everywhere. The architects of the period, whose nomenclature was full of a genial simplicity, called this a "panel rounded

1 Lower part of cupboard, Fig. 4; buffet in Fig. 12, etc.
2 Door panels of cupboard, Fig. 7.
3 Cupboards, Figs. 3 and 6.
4 Buffet, Fig. 47.
5 Cupboards, Figs. 4, 6, 7, etc.

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at the top." The whole façade of a piece of furniture may be of this shape; we then have a semicircular pediment.[1] The panel may be rounded at top and bottom.[2] Let us suppose a square panel arched in this fashion on each side; this gives a very happy motive,[3] known as a "square rounded on its faces," which is no other than a Gothic framing, very common in the thirteenth century: of this kind are the famous quadrilobate medallions that figure on the sub-basement of the doorway of Amiens cathedral. It is agreeable enough to see the men of the seventeenth century thus unconsciously re-discovering the

> . . . *fade goust des ornemens gothiques*
> *Ces monstres odieux des siècles ignorans,*
> *Que de la barbarie ont produit les torrens,*

as Molière says in detestable verses. This medallion, when simplified by the suppression of the corner angles,[4] gives the quatrefoil, which is pure Gothic also.

The combination of the semicircle with the hollowed angles gives another very common and highly typical motive,[5] which for convenience we may call the *cintre a ressaut*. This line is also found in the pediments of cupboards and sideboards,[6] at the top of the backs of certain leather

1 Buffet, Fig. 12; clocks, Figs. 56 and 57.
2 See the narrow sunk panels flanking the doors of the cupboard in Fig. 5.
3 Cupboard, Fig. 11.
4 Cupboard, Fig. 5.
5 Cupboards, Fig. 8, and under-cupboard, Fig. 14.
6 Sideboard, Fig. 48.

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chairs, and in the stretchers of the tables and seats.[1] Elongated in elevation,[2] or on the contrary flattened out,[3] modified by the greater importance given now to the arch,[4] now to the hollowed angles,[5] repeated at the two ends of a panel,[6] duplicated back to back,[7] repeated four times,[8] or combined with a simple semicircle[9] to form a medallion, this motive lends itself to a host of different uses. We shall see presently how it evolved in the Regency period. There is another shape fairly frequent in panels : it has a hollow or re-entrant semicircle at the bottom corresponding and parallel to the semicircle at the top.[10]

Besides the rectangular panel the circular or oval panel[11] was also often employed, forming a medallion. Let us note, in short, that as the Louis XIV style was addicted to parallel lines, the shape of a panel or compartment was often determined by that of the next door panel, which it complies with when the other is the more important.[12]

The division of a surface into panels may have

1 Arm-chair, Fig. 32, and chair, Fig. 38.
2 Cupboard, Fig. 6, the panels at the top of the doors.
3 Cupboard, Fig. 5.
4 Cupboard, Fig. 8, the top part.
5 Same cupboard, the lower part.
6 Cupboard, Fig. 9.
7 Cupboards, Fig. 5.
8 Cupboard, Fig. 5.
9 Cupboard, Fig. 46.
10 Under-cupboard, Fig. 14.
11 See the woodwork in Fig. 1 and the buffet, Fig. 47.
12 Cupboards, Figs. 4 and 5 (curious small compartments of ogee shape), and Figs. 9 and 10.

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no other intention than to achieve ornamentation, as in elaborate wainscoting, but it is different in the case of the doors of cupboards. Here it is essential, the traverses serving to give the solidity and firmness that the uprights would not suffice to ensure, unless the joiner made them of an excessive thickness.

Panels are edged definitely with mouldings that serve to define their shape. Louis XIV moulding is emphatic, strongly expressed, in high relief; it produces strong effects of shadow, throwing into vivid contrast the blackness of its hollows and the lights of its projections; it is often very complicated and occasionally heavy, but it is never flabby. Originating in the heavy mouldings of Louis XIII, it moves always in the direction of suppleness and refinement. There are arm-chairs of this period which have mouldings, especially on the arms, as handsome as the most perfect of the middle ages or the Louis XV period.

Its elements are wholly classic, of course: fillets and quandrantals, doucines and scotias; though it continually employs the *bec de corbin* or crow's bill motive, which comes from Gothic art, for framing.

In the proper æsthetic scheme of furniture, the part played by mouldings is to mark the different elements of its construction by bringing out their function in the piece as a whole. For example, horizontal mouldings emphasise the division of cupboards into sections, whether they

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are in two parts[1] or have a drawer.[2] But at the period we are now dealing with, pre-occupations as to the enframing, which is always so striking, and as to symmetry, often carry the day over this wholesome logic. A whole cupboard façade may be framed round like a picture,[3] while the division between the drawer section and that of the cupboard proper will not be indicated; a very high moulding will run all round the cupboard, carried along, in the lower part, across and over uprights and traverses to correspond symmetrically with the cornice.[4]

This subdivision into panels, and this use of mouldings may well suffice, by the play of the light upon the various planes and the mouldings, to create an intensely decorative result. Two handsome cupboards, reproduced here, prove this.[5]

But most frequently carving is brought into the ornamenting of massive pieces, and bronzes are placed on marquetry or veneered furniture. We must glance rapidly at the favourite motives of these two methods under Louis XIV.

The simplest motives of all, made up of lines only, are the elementary curves, which may be named the C-shaped curve (known in the seventeenth century as *anse de panier*, "basket-handle"), and the S-shaped curve, which all the

1 Fig. 3.
2 Figs. 4, 5, 7, 9, etc.
3 Fig. 11.
4 Figs. 3, 4, 5, 9, etc
5 Fig. 9 and especially 10.

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styles employed more or less. These end in two little crooks, and are frequently lightened with a little acanthus motive. The two wooden panels of Figs. 1 and 2 show them to us employed and combined in many ways: the C curves facing and crossed forming the elements of a rosette;[1] two S shapes touching at one of their curves, enframing a sprig of foliage;[2] four C shapes back to back, forming a motive in the form of a cross,[3] etc. When two S-shaped curves are crossed about one-third from their lower end, and their tips touch below, or even melt into one continuous line, we have the *boucle*.[4] A *boucle*, or several, one below the other, diminishing and ending in a floret or a *campane*,* form the *natte* or *tresse*, one of the most usual shapes of *chute*.* Among motives for backgrounds, the favourites are lozenges with florets[5] or with dots,[6] and *nattes*.[7]

Motives taken from the human figure were, of course, only used in decorating very costly and luxurious pieces. Allegory, and mythological allegory in especial, as is well known, is one of the most inveterate habits of mind among the men of the seventeenth century: whether poets or no, historical painters or artists in other styles, they can no longer express themselves, hardly

1 Fig. 1, the central rosette.
2 Fig, 2, enframement of the *fleur-de-lis*.
3 Fig. 2, the small centre panel.
4 Drawer and legs of table, Fig. 58.
5 Frieze of table in Fig. 21.
6 Frieze of tables in Figs 22 and 59; chairs, Figs. 71 and 72.
7 Fig. 6.

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even think, without mythology breaking in; and for everybody, as for Boileau,

Chaque vertu devient une divinité,
Minerve est la prudence, et Vénus la beauté . . .
Un orage terrible aux yeux des matelots,
C'est Neptune en courroux qui gourmande les flots.

A great deal of furniture, especially that made for the King, is accordingly allegorical. Here we may see Louis XIV in the guise of Hercules or Apollo, and Maria Theresa as Diana, on two cabinets, of which one is the Temple of Glory and the other the Temple of Virtue; at Versailles there is a Cabinet of Peace, and a Cabinet of War, etc., etc.

But what is much more common is the use of masks and *mascarons*. The difference between them is that a mask is a head in half relief, seen full face, but a noble and beautiful head, while a *mascaron* is a "grotesque," a "head made according to whimsy," in which elements of vegetable life are mingled with the human features, and most frequently it is the face of a satyr. The beard of this satyr is often long, plaited, and forms a *chute*. Thus, in the ornamentation of the small gilt table, reproduced in Fig. 22, the female head that adorns the middle of the frieze is a mask;[1] the satyrs' heads on the legs are mascarons. A mask or mascaron is often crowned and in a fashion aureoled with a palm-leaf ornament raying out (to which the *fontange* has a strong resemblance), whose lobes

1 So also the fine bronzes on the sides of the commode, Fig. 17.

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are decorated in various ways. This same palm leaf may also form a collarette below the mask.

The animal kingdom is largely put under contribution, "noble animals," of course: there are lion's heads,[1] lion's spoils—from the Nemean lion, lion's paws, lion's claws;[2] ram's heads, ram's horns more or less conventionalised,[3] cloven stag's hoofs.[4] Then we have the fantastic animals of mythology, dolphins, sphinxes, sea-horses, griffins, etc. The escutcheons on the keyholes of simple cupboards and buffets, made of iron, shaped and modelled with the file and then roughly engraved, often allow us to recognise the old motive of the winged dragon, though very degenerate,[5] and in other cases the dolphin.[6] And the scallop shell is almost ubiquitous.[7] It is Saint James's shell, the pilgrim's shell, but we meet it in a hundred modifications; between this and the palmette there exists every imaginable intermediate shape. It is convex, showing its outer and not its inner side, but the edges are turned over outwards.

In the vegetable kingdom the acanthus is almost the only subject sufficiently classical to be employed, but what variety of resources does it

1 Ornament (known as a *rinceau*) on the base of the commode, Fig. 54.
2 Feet of cupboard, Fig 45.
3 The ram's horn motive, much conventionalised and modified, can be recognised on each side of the mask on the table, Fig. 22.
4 Legs of table, Fig. 22, etc.
5 Cupboard, Fig. 9, etc.
6 Base of cupboard, Fig. 14.
7 Base of cupboard, Fig. 14; chair, Fig. 39.

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not offer to the artist in ornament! It bends itself to everything, takes every shape : rinceaux, stems, florets, rosettes, croziers, *boucles*. The palmette has now only very distant links with a palm leaf; it is made with ribbons, or cut out of leather rather than anything else, and anyhow it is often called a *queue de paon*,[1] "peacock's tail." We find also a water lily leaf, especially in friezes of gilt bronze, twigs of oak or laurel or olive, lilies and sunflowers,[2] which owe their inclusion to their symbolism. Garlands, known in the seventeenth century as "festoons,"[3] were made up of fruits, and roses, and narcissi, and flowers of no clear species. If in the decorations made with marquetry of coloured woods we find a little more variety and realism, tulips, tuberoses, anemones, it is because here we are dealing with an imitation of Dutch models.[4] But where we find every kind of beast—birds, lizards, butterflies, caterpillars, insects—and many different flowers represented "in natural colours," is on tables of stone mosaic, precisely because in this case the realism is a regular "tour de force," and so claimed as a beauty.

There remain the ornaments inspired by things made by man. The greatest number are again borrowed from architecture. Since the middle

1 Fig. 17, exterior angles of drawers.

2 Fig. 1, small sunflower in the middle of the rosette.

3 Boileau is speaking of garlands when he says, "*ce ne sont que festons, ce ne sont qu'astragales.*" As for the astragales he merely threw them in for luck, for the sake of the rhyme.

4 Commode, Fig. 18.

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ages, furniture has never ceased to imitate a house or a church. This is true in a less degree under Louis XIV than under Louis XIII, less under the Bourbons than under the Valois, but still the imitation is there; it was in the Louis XV period that it came to a stop for a time. At the outset of the reign, there was still many a cabinet crowned with balusters and trophies like the Palace of Versailles, that carried engaged pillars on its façade, or pilasters with Corinthian capitals, and niches for statuary. Cupboards were topped with great projecting cornices, like the Strozzi Palace or the Farnese Palace;[1] but there was a clear and increasing tendency to abandon these practices. The pillar vanished, and no hint of it is left save the flutings that adorn the rounded arrises of the early commodes.[2] The baluster, on the other hand, of round or square section, was in high favour for legs of tables and seats.[3] The console was employed almost everywhere, both as a support[4] and as a mere ornament.[5] It was often extravagantly wrenched out of shape, as for example by the unhappy complication of making the two scrolls in which it terminates, or the curves that recall

1 Observe the ressaults and *decrochements* of the cornices, so beloved of baroque architecture, in the top of the cupboard in Fig. 10 and the buffet in Fig. 11.

2 Figs. 17 and 19.

3 Table, Fig. 21; bureau, Fig. 27; arm-chair, Fig. 31; chair, Fig. 33 etc.

4 Arms of arm-chairs, Figs. 72 and 73; legs of arm-chairs, Figs. 32, 61, 62.

5 Stretcher of table, Fig. 22, and of the arm-chair, Fig. 31.

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the scrolls, move in the same instead of in opposite directions.[1] Two of these unnatural consoles placed end to end originated the bracket-shaped *accolade* found in table legs and in the cross pieces between the legs of simplified seats.[2] Modillions and denticules appear under certain cornices. The Doric triglyphs, so common on Louis XVI furniture, were used by Boulle and his rivals; they were known roundly as "*cuisses et canaux*."

Among other objects that furnished ornamental motives ancient weapons must be mentioned: the glaive, bow and quiver, naval buckler, the Bœotian helmet; mythological attributes: tridents, caducei, thunderbolts, scythes, all the equipment of the gods; trophies of musical instruments, fishing, hunting, and agricultural implements: but all these are much less employed than in the eighteenth century. Lastly, the knot of ribbon,[3] and very commonly the motive known to us as a *lambrequin*, an imitation of a strip of stuff cut with deep hanging scallops. This was called a *campane* in the seventeenth century, and a single one of these scallops, shaped like the panels *arrondis par le bout* described above, and often adorned with fringe, was called a *bout de campane*. Boulle's *gaines d'applique** were often decorated with large *bouts de campane* in colours.

1 Legs of chair, Fig. 39, etc.
2 Table, Fig. 26; seats, Figs. 34, 36, etc.
3 Table, Fig. 21.

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Over the composition, the use, and the handling of these various motives there presides the sacrosanct spirit of symmetry ever and always. For those minds and those eyes that have the passion for regularity, symmetry with reference to a vertical axis is not enough—they demand it with reference to a horizontal axis as well. We have pointed out those mouldings on cupboard bases which correspond exactly to the mouldings of the cornice. Note also those examples of wood panelling, whose top is identical with the bottom (Figs. 1 and 2), that little cupboard (Fig. 3), which might very comfortably be placed upside down; and again those table legs shaped like a bracket on end (Fig. 26), that chair back (Fig. 39), whose lower traverse has the same curve as the upper one. The Empire period, however, will be even more infatuated with these exact counterpoises.

As for colour in furniture, it seems clear that under Louis XIV people's eyes, like their other senses, were less fine, less sensitive to shocks than in the days of Louis XV, or, more especially, in the days of Louis XVI. We have already seen that the magnificent hangings that people loved to surround themselves with were often of bright colours, and very glaring colours, set against each other in bands or compartments, and no discordancy was shrunk from. Herewith are a few examples.

When the Abbé d'Effiat died, in 1698, he had in his flat in the Arsenal a bed whose *tour*

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or draperies (curtains, *bonnes graces*, scalloped hangings round the top, and valances) were of violet velvet, and the inside furnishings (foot, head and counterpane) of yellow satin. In the same room the seats were covered, some in violet velvet, the others in white and gold brocade, with one finally in crimson velvet. The colour called *aurore* was high in favour; according to Furetière, it was "a certain dazzling golden yellow." Here is what it was matched with. This same Abbé d'Effiat had a room, the chairs in which were covered with Lyons brocatelle, "aurora-coloured with red flowers." In the Tuileries there was a hanging of aurora and green damask. In the Château du Val the bench seats in the King's cabinet were aurora Venetian brocatelle flowered in green.

Mme. de Maintenon had a weakness for a combination of red and green. Her chamber at Versailles had a hanging of damask with crimson and green stripes; her bed displayed green and gold without and crimson within; a five-fold screen had three green and two red leaves. The seats were striped red and green, their wooden parts green picked out in gold. Lastly, here is the description of her famous "niche" from the Inventory of the Crown Furniture: "An oak niche, five feet ten inches long by two feet ten inches deep and eight feet and a half high, furnished inside with four widths of red damask and three widths of gold and green damask, joined with a narrow gold galoon on the seams,

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and outside with three widths of gold and green damask and two widths and a stripe of red damask similarly joined with a small gold galoon." Inside it there was a rest-bed, with a crimson coverlet lined with green.

Tables, the wooden portions of seats, and guéridons were all to match; painted red and green and gold, or blue and gold; lacquered "in the Chinese fashion," or, which was the same thing, "in the manner of porcelain," *i.e.*, lacquered white with blue decoration: we may figure to ourselves furniture something like the early manner of Rouen earthenware.

But, towards the close of the reign the taste for pure soft colour appears to prevail little by little, at the same time as wood panelling begins in many homes to take the place of the hangings of bright-hued stuffs. Speaking of the colour proper for painting wainscoating, the architect dAviler wrote in 1691, "the most beautiful colour is white, because it increases the light and rejoices the eyes."

* * * * *

The technique of furniture making was enriched with no important novelties in the second half of the seventeenth century, but practices that had been still rare about 1650 became quite usual. Such were the gilding of wood, veneering, marquetry, the upholstering of seats, to say nothing of royal and princely caprices like furniture of solid silver.

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Our master joiners, worthy successors to the good *huchiers* of bygone days, had for a long time had nothing to learn when they were given a new problem to solve—the making of very large cupboards. So well did they acquit themselves, that these monumental pieces are to-day carrying on their loyal service in provincial houses, without having interrupted them for a moment during more than two centuries. What furniture of the present day can look forward to such a destiny? The joiners then continued to create for their customers of moderate means these excellent and handsome pieces of pure carpentry work. But in the circles where people plumed themselves on refinement and elegance, there was a tendency to prefer a more brilliant surface decoration in furniture, the effect of colouring taking the place of the effect got by working in relief.

Furniture of gilded wood, or rather gilded in part, was not unknown to our ancestors, even in the fourteenth century, but it was very uncommon down to the seventeenth century. Italy, of course, that motherland of every kind of magnificence, was the first to think of full-gilding the bed, seats, tables, frames, candelabra, everything in short in a state chamber that was made of wood, and this taste did not fail to find its way into France. It would certainly have been a dream wish of Louis XIV to have furniture of solid gold; failing which he had silver, and, later on, gilded wood. The director of

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gilding at the Gobelins was an important personage, le Sieur de la Baronnière. Gilding was then carried out *à la detrempe*, and was a complicated affair. First of all, the wood was treated in the same way as that in which panels had been got ready for painting pictures in the days before canvas. To begin with, it was coated with size, and then with one thin layer after another of *blanc*, whiting melted down with skin glue, then a coat of yellow, then one of the *assiette*, into whose composition there entered not less than six or seven glutinous materials cunningly compounded; and then last of all leaf gold was laid on, and nothing remained to do but to burnish it. Furniture was silvered also: the throne of Louis XIV, after the great melting down of his plate, was silvered wood; and, so too in many cases were the caryatides or *termes* that upheld the tables on which fine cabinets were placed. This gilding of carved pieces is so familiar to us that an effort is needed to understand just to what degree it is an æsthetic heresy.

It is a heresy characteristic of a period that preferred richness, whether real or seeming, of material to the far higher kind of beauty that the work of the tool gave to materials that were already beautiful indeed, but with no intrinsic money value, materials like oak and walnut. Hence came veneering and marquetry side by side with gilding. The Louis XIII period had known an intermediate stage between solid furniture of joiners' work and veneered furniture.

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This was seen in ebony cabinets, in which the precious wood was glued on to the common wood, but in sheets of sufficient thickness to allow of their being carved in *bas-relief* and lightly moulded. Veneering made its appearance at the same time. Its technique has never changed, except that mechanical processes of cutting up wood makes it possible to-day to obtain sheets of much greater thinness. But by itself veneering does not give enough richness; and recourse was had to marquetry.

Wood marquetry[1] was not carried out in the same way as it is to-day. The panel to be decorated was first of all covered completely with the wood intended for the background, and next, the artist cut out with penknife or burin the place for the decorative motive, the various parts of which were shaped with a fret-saw and then glued in their proper places. Without being very extensive, the range of colours at the disposal of the *ébéniste*—the word came into current use precisely when that austere wood ebony went out of fashion—already was of a certain richness. Almond and box gave him yellows, holly a pure white; certain pearwoods red; walnut all the browns ranging to black; Saint Lucia wood a pinkish grey. And he could colour his wood in graded browns by "shading" it with fire.

Finding these colours dull, the *ouvriers en*

1 Boulle made use of it at the same time as marquetry with shell and metals. In the Louvre there is a cupboard by him, decorated with fine bouquets of flowers in vases, made of marquetry in wood on a ground of tortoise-shell.

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bois de rapport devised the plan, an atrocious one from the point of view of technique, and open to discussion as regards beauty, of calling in other materials, such as brass and pewter, which had already been used (like bone, ivory and mother of pearl) for inlaying, and especially as fillets to outline compartments; tortoise-shell, and lastly transparent and colourless horn, painted in vivid colours on the back. These, with gilded bronze in the shape of appliques, were the resources of the "palette," if we may risk the phrase, of André-Charles-Boulle. He used also fine stones, though very sparingly.

His method of working was as follows. The structure and frame of his furniture is quite coarsely made, and generally of deal. On this wood he glued a sheet of paper rubbed over with red or black, and over this paper the various pieces of his marquetry, obtained in the following way: if he intended to make a panel in which a motive of *rinceaux* in brass should show on a ground of tortoise-shell, he glued lightly together a sheet of copper, a sheet of tortoise-shell, and the sheet of paper on which he had made out his design; he then sawed out the whole together, unfastened them, and in this way had his ground in duplicate, both of shell and brass, and his ornament in duplicate also, brass and tortoise-shell. He then glued the tortoise-shell ground and the brass ornament on his wooden foundation, and last of all the bronze appliques were affixed. He then had the brass ground and the shell orna-

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ments left unused, and with these he made a new piece, identical in design with the first one, but with the reverse combination of materials. This second piece, less valuable than the first, was called the counterpart, *de contre-partie*; the first was said to be *de première partie*. Usualle a piece was not completely either one or the other, but elements of both kinds were combined in the work.

Unhappily there is no solidity in it. Metals do not take kindly to glue, and all these heterogeneous materials behave in different ways in heat and damp. These pieces therefore demand continual restorations, and are not even to be used: they are simply for museums.

To add the last touches to their sumptuousness, and give them at the same time that allegorical significance which was so appreciated in his day, Boulle added to these pieces appliques of gilt bronze, often admirable at every point for their casting, their chasing and their gilding alike. Some distinction must be made in these bronzes. If we examine them carefully, we see that some of them are ornaments pure and simple, while others serve to strengthen the piece, to protect it from being knocked about, and to resist the strain and play of the wood. For example, the sort of square pieces at the angles of doors have their use; they serve to reinforce the juncture of the upright and the traverse, metal frames take the place of the useful projections made by the mouldings used

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by the joiner cabinet-makers. Other bronzes play the part of braces. Once admitting the principle of these superadded ornaments, it was a wholesome and logical notion to make them contribute to the solidity of the piece ; we shall see this acted on, and much better, by the cabinet-makers of the Regency style. But at bottom it was a throwing back of several centuries to the methods of the unskilled hutchers of the thirteenth century, who did not know how to put their coffers together strongly and solidly, and so clamped their boards in position by means of iron braces.

We have seen how the taste for bright colours led to the painting of many pieces of furniture ; and the admiration lavished on the lacquers of the Far East, and the desire to copy them or simply to imitate them, ended in the discovery of the process of lacquering. Foucquet and Mazarin already had furniture "of the Chinese fashion," but a native of Liége, called Dagly, invented a kind of lacquer of great brilliancy and solidity, a discovery that opened the doors of the Gobelins to him, and this was known as the "vernis des Gobelins." At the close of the reign the staff of the factory included a "Directeur des ouvrages de la Chine," and great efforts were made to imitate black and gold lacquer ware, which was to be achieved a little later, in exquisite perfection, by the celebrated Martin.

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CHAPTER II: PANELLED FURNITURE, BEDS AND TABLES

The group of panelled furniture was augmented during the period of the Louis XIV style by very important items, the great cupboard in one piece, the sideboard cupboard, the dresser-sideboard, the under-cupboard, the bookcase, andthe commode. On the other hand, the coffer was packed off into garrets by the city folk, and was only made now for country people; and the cabinet, which taken all in all and in its origin, was merely a costly coffer elaborated and mounted on a wall table, disappeared for good.

These births and deaths, so to speak, arise from a great change in manners. Down to the middle of the seventeenth century, our forefathers' way of living kept traces of the half nomad existence of the middle ages, those times when, for instance, a man of rank, the lord of three separate châteaux, had only one set of furniture for all three, and took everything he possessed with him when he went from one to the other. His possessions were so few, and it would have been so unwise to leave anything behind that could be pillaged! Pieces of furniture therefore that were meant as receptacles (what we call panelled furniture), were small and

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sufficiently portable to be loaded on to a pack-horse. Hence the persistence of the coffer, so inconvenient in itself; hence the quite small cupboard of the sixteenth century, made in two parts, one on top of the other, which merely became larger, without change of structure, in the Louis XIII period, and hence too the handles to be seen on the sides of so many coffers and even of some cupboards.

But under Louis XIV affairs were more stationary and settled; people moved less readily from place to place, even though it was easier to do so, and they had infinitely more things to lock away, clothes, linen, etc., than the preceding generations. And so large furniture makes its appearance, and in particular the large cupboard with one or two doors. There had always been but few in Paris, and no trouble had been taken to make handsome things of them,[1] because the habit of receiving visitors in the bedchamber was given up earlier in Paris than in the provinces, because in Paris people had *garde-robes*,[2] and because women there did not take so much pride and invest a large proportion of their dowries in imposing piles of blankets and napkins. But among the ladies of provincial châteaux and business circles, and farmers' wives when they became well off, the great cupboard, as great and as handsome as possible, was the

1 And in consequence the few that did exist were not preserved.

2 At Paris, a *garde-robe* was a small room adjoining the bedchamber; in the South it was a great cupboard.

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essential piece of furniture, a thing they were proud to have and to display. Many of these Louis XIV cupboards, more imposing than attractive, are superb in their lines and proportions, impeccable in their architecture, and without rivals in decorative value in a huge room, the hall of a château, or a great country mansion.

Those of the pure Louis XIV style—which does not necessarily mean that they were made before 1715—can be recognised by their cornice, which is nearly always horizontal, projects very far, and shows a complicated style of moulding; by their rectangular doors, subdivided into flat panels of shapes already described, and lastly by their feet, which are sometimes flattened balls[1] or burly volutes[2] or lions paws,[3] when they have a reversed cornice at the base going round three sides; sometimes they are merely a prolonging of the uprights, cut off short.[4] They display no carving, or but very little. The models dating from the end of the style, and "approaching the Regency manner," as the dealers say, allow a few curves in their structure as a whole: these are the most agreeable to the eye, such as the fine model of Fig. 10, in which those inflected lines, which are yet very restrained, come in so happily to soften the silhouette.

Cupboards from the different provinces had

1 Figs. 4, 5, 7, etc.
2 Figs. 10 and 5.
3 Fig. 45.
4 Figs. 6 and 8.

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not yet, in the period to which our attention is directed, any very marked differences. What then distinguished the furniture of one region from that of another was the fact that the new style had already or had not as yet arrived, rather than any different shades in the style itself. Let us note, however, that the cupboards made in the South-west [1] are distinguished by their abundant mouldings; those of Lorraine [2] by the somewhat frequent use of very simple marquetry or inlay in coloured woods, and the quadrilobate medallion; and Normandy cupboards [3] by their elegant proportions, their delicate carving and their classic cornices with denticles.

The small cupboard in two parts and with two *volets* or doors, and the larger one with four doors, were still made, but less and less often, and they almost always display the characteristics of the Louis XIII style. Nevertheless we reproduce, in Fig. 3, a graceful little Norman example with two doors, a *bonnetière* or bonnet cupboard if you like, which clearly has the marks of the Louis XIV manner.

Furniture became specialised at the same time as the rooms in flats. Here is the *bas d'armoire*,[4] or under-cupboard, with or without a drawer in the upper part, the name of which recalls its resemblance to the lower section of the cupboards

1 Figs. 4, 7, and 9.
2 Fig. 11. Note the same or an analogous motive on cupboards or sideboards from Lorraine, Figs. 46, 49 and 57.
3 Fig. 6.
4 Fig. 14.

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made in two parts. Those we meet with to-day are very often in reality the lower halves of old cupboards whose top sections have been destroyed. They were used in antechambers, and in certain districts (at Paris in particular and in the South, where they were presently to give birth to the *buffet-crédence* of the Arles region) as a sideboard in the dining-room or the kitchen, which for many people were the same thing. The bas d'armoire, sometimes called a *demi-buffet*, a half-sideboard, was about four feet in height, and varied greatly in width ; there were some that had three doors.

Books had heretofore been kept in ordinary cupboards or shelves, or simply piled along the wall. At the end of the seventeenth century the numbers of books in the houses even of people of no great culture were greatly increased, and the need of devoting a special piece of furniture to them was strongly felt : so the bookcase was born, at first known as a "bookcase cupboard." Already we have made the acquaintance of Boileau's three bookcases. As people in those days were not so cramped for space in their homes as we are, and as their books were not so overwhelming in numbers, it was not necessary to run them up to a great height—a method that is far from convenient, and is full of danger for the books, as it multiplies the risks of falling. The book cupboard therefore was an under-cupboard, a little taller than usual; its doors were fitted with a trellis made of iron wire, behind which there was a curtain of pleated

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taffeta. A little later they were glazed as well, and Boulle made some of this kind, in marquetry. We may note here that the bookcases standing breast high, made by Boulle or his imitators, that to-day adorn the Gallery of Apollo in the Louvre, were originally cabinets that were dismounted from their supports when in the nineteenth century they were employed in the decoration of the château of Saint-Cloud. This massacre, like so many more, must be written down against Louis-Philippe.

The sideboard in two sections[1] is, in a larger shape, the old cupboard with four doors, with or without drawers between the two sections. It has all the characteristics of the cupboard. The upper doors are *always* of wood. We seize the opportunity to repeat this; for it is sheer vandalism to mutilate these fine old pieces by tearing out their wooden panels to replace them with glazing. The *buffet-vaisselier*, or dresser-sideboard, which was the *palier* of Normandy and the *ménager* of Champagne, with all its varieties, was certainly not invented before the Regency. And yet we show one,[2] of a very graceful and individual type, which was made in Lorraine, and may be said to be in the Louis XIV style by reason of its ball-shaped feet. It is a curious combination of the sideboard, the dresser, and the commode. The folk of Lorraine have always loved these huge pieces of manifold utility.

The coffers of the Louis XIV period are very

1 Fig. 12. 2 Fig. 13.

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simple, and very far fallen from their sixteenth century splendours; they are generally mounted on a set of legs with a drawer.[1] The most interesting were covered in leather, pigskin, or cowhide, sometimes red morocco, with a cunning decoration of gilt nails. This decorative studding often showed very remarkable composition, as may be seen on the coffer in Fig. 16, with its royal crown and fleurs de lis. The keyhole escutcheon is a large plate of repoussé and open-worked brass.

Let us salute, for the last time before its total disappearance, the cabinet, which was beginning to go out of fashion about 1690, after having been for three-quarters of a century pre-eminently the piece of furniture of supreme elegance, and especially affected by ladies, the article upon which wild sums of money and treasures of ingenuity were expended, which had gratified so much vanity when opened so as to allow its interior refinement to be admired. We have told of the mineralogical lavishness of certain among them which must have been, and which were, excessively ugly: we can judge of this from a specimen displayed in the Cluny Museum. There were many much less ambitious examples that were charming; for example, those which the arquebuse makers inlaid with the most delicate arabesques in bone or ivory on ebony and violet wood. Those which were quite simple continued to be made in the Louis XIII style, with pilasters and other architectural motives.

1 Fig. 15,

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Of all the novelties the commode was the one called to the most brilliant career. Some authorities will have it that it originated in the coffer, others in the under-cupboard, still others in the table. A grave problem, of the same kind as the puzzle whether the sofa is a rest-bed transformed, or a bench carried to perfection. What is quite certain is that it was invented round about the year 1700; that some persons of the time called it a *bureau-commode*; that Madame, the Regent's mother, in a letter dated 1718, still thought it needed definition: "A commode is a large table with drawers." Would it then be a table to which drawers had been added? But here is Sobry, almost at the same moment, writing in his *Architecture*: "Coffers or arks are commonly called *commodes*. Some have a lid, others have drawers." However it may be, they deserved their name so well that they were presently everywhere to be seen.

Boule made some famous ones, known as *commodes en tombeau*, because their main shape with two drawers is in the form of the sarcophagi that were placed on the tombs of that period. These are, it must be confessed, very pretentious and irrational compositions. Others with three drawers, massive, of excessively chubby contours and with angles displaying the *pied de biche* or "doe's foot" outline, will only have to gain a little simplicity and more disciplined and slender outlines to become the beautiful "Regency commode." Finally, there is a last family of

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those superb and costly commodes in brass and tortoise-shell marquetry that came out of the workshops of the Boulles; these have four drawers, are rectangular, with a straight façade and vertical uprights. The contrast of the austere simplicity of the lines with the amazingly sumptuous decoration of the surfaces is extremely effective; but how icy chill it all is!

On the other hand, certain commodes of this time, more moderate in richness, have a really grandiose beauty, like the one we see in Fig. 17, whose beautiful broadly chased bronzes are so happily placed, and so well enframed by the sober marquetry, and upon which the flutings on the angles, fitted with brass and starting from an acanthus stem, set such noble architectural lines. The piece shown in the next plate, Fig. 18, supremely simple in its construction, owes all its interest to its slightly enlivened façade and its superb marquetry of coloured wood made up of bouquets and *rinceaux* of flowers: a florid, branchy decoration that was certainly inspired by some Netherlandish model. The ground is ebony, the flowers of white and red pearwood, holly and satinwood.

* * * * *

Beds of the Louis XIV period are extremely rare, and this is very natural. Their monumental size—some were 2 mètres 25 centimètres long, 2 mètres 20 centimètres wide, and 3 mètres 50 centimètres high—was the cause of their destruction as soon as the fashion for bedroom

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of moderate dimensions arrived. Furthermore, the wooden bed, inasmuch as it was completely covered up in stuffs, had no artistic value that might save it; and lastly, they were almost all four-posters, "à hauts piliers,"[1] and this shape was already beginning to appear "Gothic" in the eighteenth century.

These edifices were be-curtained with a costly luxuriousness of stuffs of which we can now have no idea, embroideries, fringes, cords, gold tassels, and plumes of feathers. In the homes of people of quality or of wealthy business people the state bed had often cost more than all the rest of the furniture; by the bed the fortune might be known; with the carriage it was the most convincing of all the signs of wealth. The hangings, *tenture*, or *parement*, or *tour de lit*, were almost always fashioned with wide vertical stripes, strongly defined, in which plain velvet, Genoa velvet with large flowers, brocade with palm branch pattern, and damask of three colours alternated with one another, or with embroidered stuffs "so interwoven with gold that it was difficult to distinguish the ground," fine stitch tapestry "divided up into pictures by a line of silver embroidery," and other works of infinite patience. The equipment was extremely complicated, for every kind of bulwark against cold was multiplied. A bed in those days was a small hermetically sealed chamber within the large one,

1 It was also known as "*a quenouilles*," in modern phrase *à colonnes*.

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into which there could penetrate neither the draughts that made even the King's bedchamber in Versailles almost uninhabitable in winter, nor the indiscreet eyes of people obliged to pass at all hours through those rooms that had no side entrances, nor the continual clatter and noise of those days in which no one had the slightest idea of privacy.

The four pillars, covered in sheaths known as *quenouilles*, supported a tester called the *fond*, always elaborately decorated, and surrounded by four curtain rods, from which there hung the *dossier* against the wall, and curtains to the number of three, four, six, and even eight. The rods were hidden on the outside by the three *pentes de dehors*, and on the inside by the four *pentes de dedans*,[1] which were bands of stuff hanging down, with straight or scalloped edges. On each side of the head, and on each side of the foot there were narrow supplementary curtains, the *bonnes grâces*, falling straight down alongside the pillars, on the outside of the large curtains which they hide when the latter are pulled open ; the *bonnes grâces* were very often made of a stuff whose colour made a strong contrast against that of the curtains. Narrower still, the cantonnières at the angles complete the sealing process by covering the chink that might be found at that point. The bed itself, properly

1 The bed in Fig. 20 has six curtains, two *bonnes grâces cantonnières*, a *fond*, seven *pentes*, a great *dossier*, a *dossier chantourne* (see further on), and a counterpane.

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speaking (*châlit* or bedstead, *paillasse*, *sommier*, mattress, feather-beds, blankets and quilt), was hidden by the *soubassement*, the valance, which runs round it on three sides, and by the counterpane, always very richly ornate, which covered it over.

To recapitulate: four *quenouilles*, a *fond*, seven *pentes*, a *dossier*, eight curtains, four *bonnes grâces*, four *cantonnières*, a *soubassement* in three sections, a counterpane . . . the equipment of a really complete bed was made up of thirty-three component parts!

We must be careful not to forget the magnificent plumes, except for their colour exactly like those on our modern hearses, surmounting the bed posts. These four *bouquets de plumes* were made up of a round hundred ostrich feathers disposed around aigrettes of heron feathers; they were white, green and white, green, yellow and white, whatever the colour of the bed might be. Sometimes they were replaced by knobs covered with stuff, as in the time of Louis XIII, or by vases from which stood up either metal bunches of flowers or little crystal branching candelabra.

It may properly be repeated that beds of such splendour were never made for daily use, but were the ornament of the state chamber, which was the reception room in which all the luxury of the house was concentrated, the room in which the owners gave dinners and receptions. The fashion of the "ruelle," launched by the incomparable Arthénice in the hey-day of the *précieuses*,

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took a long time to disappear, and more than one lady round about 1670, without in the least being a belated *précieuse*, was still in the habit of receiving her women friends half reclining—fully dressed, not *en déshabille*—on her bed, or even in it. Furetière, even while declaring that the habit was a thing of the past, wrote just before 1688 that the alcove was the part of the room "in which the bed and chairs for company were usually placed." And these fittings, made of stuffs that were often very delicate, and which represented a fortune, were protected by a whole paraphernalia of loose covers and *coiffes*—they were uncovered only on important occasions.

Such was the Louis XIV bed, a perfect symbol of that period so taken with pomposity and marvels. Even when we run through the inventories of middle class business people, we are stupefied at the coquettish richness of their beds. It is all striped crimson velvet and silver moire, black velvet alternating with flame-coloured damask, curtains of gold and silver embroidery lined with cloth of silver, *bonnes grâces* of English embroidery, scalloped *pentes* of gold and silk, *soubassements* of yellow taffeta, counterpanes of Chinese satin with gold embroidery, or Indian damasks. What kind of bed must M. Jourdain have had, he who, like his father, was a connoisseur in stuffs!

We have seen that Boileau's bed in his Paris house was nowise lacking in elegance, nor even in a certain stately splendour. His friend, Molière,

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was far richer than he was, and the sumptuousness of his bed bordered on extravagance. It is true, that as the son of the King's *tapissier*, and himself holding the reversion of that office, he owed it to himself not to be bedded like any casual pauper, and it is further true that play actors are not always folk of the quietest taste. And thus it was that his state best bed was "a couch with eagle feet in green bronze, with gilt and painted headpiece, carved and gilt; a dome with azure ground, carved and gilt; four knobs in shape of vases, also of gilded wood; the dome aforesaid. . . ." But it is better to summarise this dreadful prose of some tipstaff and *sergent à verge* of the Châtelet. That majestic dome, azure and gold without, was decked inside with aurora and green taffeta; from it there fell down an *entour de lit* of one single piece, aurora and green, in the shape of a *pavillon* or tent, with three widths of flax-grey (*gris de lin*) taffeta embroidered in gold, to which were added, for no clear reason, yet four more curtains of flowered brocade with violet ground. The counterpane, *gris de lin* and gold, embroidered with ciphers, was lined with red *toile boucassinée* (a starched cotton material). And we spare the reader the tale of fringes, *mollets*, embellishments, cords, tassels of fine gold, of imitation gold, green silk, aurora and *gris de lin*.

The simplest beds, those belonging to people of modest estate, were hung with woollen stuffs, such as Aumale serge, green or red or "dried-

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rose-leaf" colour; or of *damas cafart*, a mixture of wool and silk or cotton and silk, of Bruges satin with linen warp, and other "petty stuffs" that were sold in the rue Saint-Denis, close by the gate of Paris, from which they were known as *étoffes de la Porte*.

Dome beds, such as Molière's, were called *à l'impériale*; tomb-beds, of an ugly shape that diminished still further the "cube of air" at the disposal of the sleepers, had much lower posts at the foot than at the head, which gave a sloped tester. The *Dictionnaire de Trévoux* gives an ingenious explanation of this shape: "They were invented to be placed in garrets, because the roof prevented their being given the same height at the foot as at the head." And they are always, in reality, beds of a very modest kind.

All beds were not four-posters. The duchess-bed had a hanging tester, as long and as wide as the couch, two curtains and two *bonnes grâces*; the angel-bed tester was shorter, and the side curtains were caught back by loops of knotted ribbons, the *galants*. The bed standing at present in the chamber of Louis XIV at Versailles was reconstructed under Louis Philippe with no great accuracy: it is a duchess-bed, while the Sun-King's bed was invariably a four-poster.

At the close of the reign beds had a double *dossier*, both head and foot. The *grand dossier* was a breadth of stuff fastened to the tester and hanging flat against the wall at the head of the

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bed; in front of this was a *dossier* of shaped wood, standing up from the frame of the bedstead, and with a loose cover of embroidered stuff; its complicated outline procured it the name of curved dossier (*dossier chantourné*) or chantourné de lit.[1] It could also be of naked wood, carved and gilt. Lastly, about the same time came the fashion for *disordered beds*, whose hangings were rumpled and cunningly disarranged with much assistance from cords and gold tassels, like those emphatic draperies beloved of the portrait painters Rigaud and Largillière, which the Maréchal de Grammont neatly called "hyperboles in velvet."

The rest-bed, father of the *chaise longue* and the sofa, which at the outset was practically undistinguishable from it, had made its appearance in the days of Mazarin. It became quite usual under Louis XIV, and Molière had five in his house, one of which matched his great bed of state. Its average size was 2 mètres long by 80 centimètres wide. Set as a fixture by a wall, it often had at the head a high dossier of carved gilt wood and a tester like a duchess-bed, or an angel-bed; it was sometimes fitted with permanent upholstery nailed on to the wood, sometimes a mattress or two mattresses on top of the other. Other rest-beds, more easy to handle, had two dossiers that occasionally were movable ones.

* * * * *

1 Fig. 20.

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In the days of Mazarin tables ceased to be hidden under covers falling down to the floor, and so they began to display a wholly new magnificence after the Italian fashion. No longer was there a set of furniture to be found, however modest, without a few tables with elaborate legs, stretchers, and friezes, laden with carvings that were most frequently gilded, and for their tops a marquetry-piece of wood and pewter or tortoise-shell and brass, or a slab of costly marble, granite, porphyry, or Oriental alabaster, or else a marquetry of many-coloured stone mosaic, framed in black marble or touch. These last kind were called "Florence tables." Mazarin brought them over from Italy, but Colbert suborned in Tuscany specialist craftsmen to come to the Gobelins and train French pupils. This sumptuous method of decoration, though prone to become a trifle loud, as may be seen at Versailles and in the Apollo Gallery, was made up of elaborate rinceaux, emblems, or flowers and birds in "natural" colours; the stone tesseræ, which were laid with astounding accuracy and precision, were lapis lazuli, cornelian, jasper, chalcedony, and even mother of pearl.

These tables were enormously heavy, and besides, they became an integral part of the decoration of a room. They were left accordingly permanently in place against the wall; only three of their faces were seen, and the fourth was left without ornament. Since the legs were often shaped like the architectural consoles in fashion,

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as we have pointed out, at this period they were called "console tables," or more simply still, "consoles"; and by an extension of idea, the name *consoles de milieu* was given to tables highly ornamented on all four faces, but made to stand out in the middle of a room. Finally, when *consoles de milieu* had become very common, the others were called *consoles d'applique*.

When not console-shaped, or double consoles (two consoles back to back) the legs of Louis XIV tables were *en gaîne* or *en balustre*[1] (pedestal or baluster-shaped). Among the fifteen or so types of balusters used by architects, the cabinet-makers of course chose for their table legs those whose thickest part is above, urn-balusters and vase-balusters with square section, or the *composite renversé* with circular section and gadroons. They did not fail also to lengthen them according to their caprice or to make them as complicated as they pleased. The flat baluster, *en façade*,* was also very much used, as well as the pedestal shape.

Besides these legs, which have a vertical axis, there was to be found, more and more frequently as the reign drew towards its end, the *pied de biche* or "doe's foot" with highly accentuated curve. At first it was made up of two long-drawn S-shaped curves, in continuation of one another back to back and each ending in two little volutes, the lower standing on a cloven

1 Fig. 21.

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stag's hoof, the upper often ornamented with a *mascaron* in hollow profile.[1] The two curves were next coalesced into one.

The frieze carries, on the façade if it is a *console d'applique* or wall table, on every side or the long sides if a simple table, an "apron" (tablier) of ornaments cut out and carved in open-work, the centre-piece of which was usually a mask or *mascaron*; the background of the frieze is lozenged.[2] The cross pieces of the stretcher, which is seldom missing,[3] were made of S curves or consoles[4] arranged in different combinations: their line was too often lost under an excess of ornamental carving.

Tables not so rich, but still very highly ornate, were made in natural or painted woods, and their tops also made of wood; as for quite simple tables of the Louis XIV style there are practically none in existence: during the whole of the century tables continued to be made whose turned legs, whether twisted or not,[5] cause them to be assigned to the Louis XIII period. "What is called a 'table column' (*colonne de table*)," says Richelet in his *Dictionnaire* (1680), "is any piece of wood turned or twisted that serves to hold up the top part of a table." Nevertheless, here we have two, one[6] of quite countrified make,

1 Fig. 22.
2 Figs. 21 and 22.
3 See, nevertheless, Fig. 21.
4 Fig. 22.
5 Figs. 23 and 24; the stretchers are clearly Louis XIV.
6 Fig. 25.

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the other[1] more bourgeois in character, which can quite properly be called Louis XIV by reason of their supports, doe's feet *en façade* or upright bracket legs. The elegance and logic of this latter shape of leg are, to speak candidly, both extremely open to discussion.

As it was not far from the time when the table was ordinarily a flat tray set on trestles, it was not yet fixed in people's minds that it formed an inseparable whole, and accordingly we often find in the inventories items such as "a table of carved walnut, on its foot of the same wood," which does not mean a table in two parts; and this explains oddities such as those tables whose top and frieze are walnut, while the legs and stretcher are of gilded wood.

We saw how in the preceding period the genus table began to be subdivided into species. This evolution continued under the great King, and it was in his day that little writing tables (*en écritoire*) appeared, covered with black morocco, green panne or crimson velvet, with a drawer that held the inkstand and the brass pounce-box. Society was becoming more and more epistolary in its habits.

We know how high the passion for gaming ran in this epoch, especially at Court, where the struggle against boredom was a desperate one. And so for *hoca*—"that abominable hoca," Madame de Sévigné called it—for reversi, for basset, for brelan, for ombre, there were needed

1 Fig. 26.

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quantities of tables, each specially planned for its particular game, pentagonal, square, triangular, according to the number of the players; they were covered in green velvet and sometimes fitted with purses, one in the middle and one for each player, and accompanied at each corner by a little guéridon on which a single or branching candlestick was placed. Guéridons to match also went with console tables and cabinets: these were not little round tables of the same height as the others, but tall candle bearers, often monumental in size, made of a support of gilded wood and a branching candelabrum of crystal or metal.

There is one novelty that already round 1680 announces the taste that will distinguish the eighteenth century for small, delicate, easily moved articles of furniture. This is the *cabaret*, "called in Chinese *bandège* (?)," the most frequently used variety of which was the *cabaret à café*. This was the name given to a light table with two trays in "*vernis de Chine*," Chinese lacquer, used to carry and to pass round china, and coffee cups in particular.

Toilet-tables and night-tables appeared towards the close of the reign; there were fourteen of the former and twelve of the latter in the Château de Rambouillet when it was acquired by the Crown and furnished in 1706 for the Comte de Toulouse, the legitimate son of Madame de Montespan. A *toilette* was originally a square piece of linen, in which were gathered together for putting away in the night coffer (*coffre de nuit*) the various

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articles used in cleansing and beautifying the face the hair and the hands; when the moment had come for them the *toilette* was laid out on any table, its contents arranged in goodly array, and thereupon began the service of beauty. The modest square of linen did not fail to transmute itself into a little mat of crimson velvet with gold lace trimming, Isabella-coloured moire lined with aurora taffeta and embellished with a little gold or silver lace; and men's *toilettes* were no less gay than the ladies'. Had not that genial gardener, André le Nostre, one of white satin, embroidered in silver and gold and silk? And then the *toilette* gave its name to the articles laid out on it, as to the operation for which they were used, and to the tables specially made to carry them, tables whose boxes or drawers replaced the night coffer. Ideas of cleanliness making some modest progress, there was a *dessous de toilette* permanently in position on the table in question, and made of costly materials, this was covered by a *dessus de toilette* in muslin with flounces or furbelows, which was easily changed. But it was only under Louis XV that the *toilette* became the pretty piece of furniture with compartments so well known to us.

From the writing-table was born the bureau, from the first third of the seventeenth century. Already under Louis XIV it might be of various different forms. The flat bureau was a large writing-table, covered with leather, fitted with three drawers, and often accompanied by a little

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subsidiary article, the *gradin*, made up of shelves or drawers, sometimes equipped with a door shutting with lock and key, which stood on one end of the table; a little later there were also *gradins*, called rather *serre-papiers*, or paper-holders, larger in size, furnished with feet and standing on the ground beside the table. Other Louis XIV bureaux with multiple drawers were more or less like our ugly *bureaux ministres*: but they are less heavy, carried as they are on eight fairly tall legs joined four and four by cross-shaped stretchers. Their decoration was exceedingly painstaking and exquisite: veneering of walnut outlined in pewter, inlay of brass on ebony, on tortoise-shell, etc.; André Charles Boulle has left us a great number of these. The top was either flat or *à brisure*;[1] the angles of the sections to right and left were reinforced by those characteristic projecting buttresses whose curves give them the appearance of violins cut in two. One of the most perfect that ever came out of the Boulle workshops is in the Petit Palais, in the Dutuit collection.

The most monumental of all are the *scribannes*. These imposing pieces, Flemish or Dutch in their origin, have a desk or flap, a niche for the legs of the person writing, drawers to the right and left down to the ground; the upper part is a cupboard with two doors, surmounted by a pediment with a platform for delft. The bureau shown in Fig. 27 is not quite so huge and important

1 With desk slope.

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as this, despite its score of drawers and its *guichet*; its style in any case has nothing Flemish about it.

Ladies' bureaux, as is fitting, are smaller in size. Madame de Maintenon had two in her chamber, "of marquetry of pewter on a ground of walnut wood, with four drawers and a guichet in front with sloping flap and three drawers, standing on eight pedestal pillars of the same work with silvered wood capitals and bases." Their dimensions were two feet nine inches by one foot nine inches (89 by 57 centimètres). Bureaux of this kind are what are called in the modern dealers' jargon, "donkey backed" (*à dos d'âne*); the eighteenth century said *bureaux à pente*, "slanting bureaux."

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CHAPTER III : SEATS

Here begins a chapter of very great importance when we are dealing with furniture under Louis XIV! If anyone cared to extract from Saint-Simon's Memoirs everything pertaining to the hierarchy of Seats, the jealousies, quarrels, intrigues, secret conspiracies, usurpations, wrongs, vengeances, triumphs and humiliations that could spring out of the question of the right to the arm-chair or to the backed chair, to the high stool or the ordinary stool, he might fill more than one volume. Dangeau and Luynes are in every page busy over this thorny and engrossing question of the backed chair. Are folding stools and plain tabouret-stools equal in honour? A serious business; Saint-Simon decides learnedly that "there is no difference whatever between these two seats with neither arms nor back." If the duchesses are visiting in the apartments of a princess of the blood, they sit in arm-chairs; but let the King come in and they must needs hasten to leave the arm-chairs, as having no longer any right to them in His Majesty's presence, and curtsy made, they must sit upon stools, quitted by ladies who are not duchesses, to whom in turn etiquette now only allows a hassock. This etiquette with regard to chairs is in any case, as may well be believed, no more elaborate at Versailles than at Madrid or in London; on the

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contrary, the Court of France is the only one where the height of the chair back is of no consequence; in every other European Court "the difference in the height of the chair-back marks the difference between persons." This is the order of precedence: at the bottom, the hassocks: those of noble ladies are adorned with gold gimp; those for ladies of the law and the bourgeoisie have a mere silk edging. Next come folding stools and joint stools; then the chairs with backs, and, last and highest, the arm-chair.

Nothing is more significant than a Louis XIV arm-chair, except a Louis XIV bed: all the characteristics of the style, more than that even, the very character of the period itself is summed up in it. It is an ample, stately seat, of imposing size and strength; its lofty rectangular back seems made to be the worthy frame for a majestic and virile head in a peruke, and for shoulders widened by the floods of ribbons of the "*petite oie*," or for a woman's head crowned with the Apollo rays of the high head-dress known as the *fontange*; its great size, the massive volutes of its arms, its legs joined heavily with heavy cross pieces, all give it an air of immobility and weight. We can see it remaining fixed in one place with a willing air, decorative, and useless, ranged with its peers along the wall of an alcove; to have it moved it seems as though one must call up a pair of lackeys, and two great clumsy fellows with gold lace on every seam must bring it forward with due solemnity. To see it evokes the idea of choice

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conversation, full of ceremony and well regulated, stiff attitudes, and snuff taken with delicately studied gestures. What a difference compared to a gondola-shaped *bergère* of the following reign, all grace and comfort, all made up of fugitive elusive curves that slip away without bringing the eye to a halt!

Impossible not to speak first of all of the king of arm-chairs . . . we mean the throne of Louis XIV. Let us salute it as we go by, even as anyone would have been obliged to do if in the Grands Appartements at Versailles he crossed the Apollo Salon, also known as the "Chamber of the dais." It stood upon a platform with several steps, surmounted by a dais all gold embroidery of overwhelming richness; before the great melting down of plate in 1689-90 it was all solid silver, draped with crimson velvet; for feet it had four figures of children carrying baskets of flowers upon their heads; on the summit of the back, which was eight feet high, about 2 mètres 60 centimètres, a laurel-crowned Apollo held his lyre. To go with this there was a hanging of eight great widths of embroidered stuff with eighteen pilasters, all dull silver and bright gold, with a trifle of chenille, and flanking it to right and left —our imagination fails before the task of picturing such magnificences—there stood two caryatides in full relief, fifteen feet high, nearly 5 mètres, entirely made of full gold embroidery! Is it permissible to think that this was not perhaps very beautiful? After 1690 the royal

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throne was a much more modest affair. The General Inventory of Crown Furniture is satisfied with the following description: "A large wooden arm-chair, carved with several ornaments and silvered, to be used as a throne for the King when he gives audiences to ambassadors; the said arm-chair done in velvet embellished with gold and silver embroidery."

But what precisely are we to call a Louis XIV arm-chair? It must be confessed that the assigning of a piece of furniture or a chair to this style or that is often very arbitrary, but every classification, whether with regard to antique objects, plants or molluscs, calls for simplification, the elimination of many exceptions, sports and hybrids, and insists that only what remains after these processes shall be reckoned. Thus, for the sake of greater convenience, among the seventeenth century arm-chairs it will be permissible to assign to the Louis XIII style all those whose backs are still low, square, or of greater width than height; and to the Louis XIV style those in which the back is higher than its width. But there is no very clearly marked distinction between the Louis XIV arm-chair and the Regency arm-chair, as there is a very numerous series of "transition" models. We shall speak of the latter at the end of this volume; in the present chapter we shall deal only with purely Louis XIV seats, *i.e.*, those with high rectangular back, legs *en façade*, and, in the case of arm-chairs with arms not set back (the ends of the

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arms carried on consoles that are vertical continuations of the legs).

Upholstered arm-chairs have their backs completely covered with no wood showing; the top of this back is a straight line, the lower part is sometimes separated from the seat by a gap[1] and sometimes not.[2]

The legs continue in many cases, as in the time of Louis XIII, to be turned,[3] even in costly chairs; for example, on Molière's death there were twenty-two arm-chairs in his house, among which were "twelve of twisted walnut with lion heads and six with sphinx faces; two of walnut with twisted pillars." The latter two, more sumptuous, and matching the bed of state, were of carved and gilded wood. The legs, either moulded or carved, are sometimes baluster-shaped,[4] sometimes pedestal-shaped, very often console-shape;[5] they end in flattened balls, sometimes carved,[6] or in lion feet; or else the lower scroll tip of the console rests directly on the ground, with a little cube of plain wood interposed to take hard wear and knocks,[7] or, again, the consoles have one base squared and moulded, from which the stretcher cross-pieces start, and under this a second base of the same kind, as in the excellent model shown in Fig. 32, so unhappily covered in one of those hideous needle-

1 Figs. 28, 30, etc.
2 Figs. 32, 36, etc.
3 Figs. 28, 29, 35.
4 Figs. 31 and 38.
5 Figs. 32 and 33.
6 Figs. 29 and 30.
7 Fig. 33.

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work tapestries made by our grandmothers under the Second Empire.

The stretcher is a *sine qua non*. Arm-chairs and backed chairs were so big and so heavy that their legs would have been dislocated or speedily broken if they had not been solidly joined together at the foot. At the beginning of the period, and when arm-chairs had turned legs, the cross bars were shaped like an H,[1] and the place where they were morticed into the legs was left square for greater strength; this part often had a four-leaved rosette carved into it.[2] Sometimes there is an additional traverse joining the two front legs near the top; this gives greater firmness to the frame of the chair, but is above all decorative. If it was ornamented in the middle with a carved motive,[3] upholsterers gave it the name of a *blason*. Console legs might also have an H-shaped stretcher; each of the cross bars is, in that case, made of two consoles set end to end which, slightly simplified, give the *accolade*[4] or bracket motive frequently employed. The X-shaped stretcher is more elegant, freer, less square in shape; it can be of immense importance decoratively, as in the case of tables. There are two principal types; either four consoles are joined head to head to make a large central motive,[5] sometimes a very clumsy one, or else perhaps the moulded cross-pieces form, to the

1 Figs. 28, 30, etc.
2 Fig. 30.
3 Fig. 29.
4 Figs. 34 and 36.
5 Fig. 31.

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right and the left, two of the motives we have called *cintres à ressaut*, and met with so frequently on the panels of cupboards. These come together tangentially at the deepest part of the curve, and are completed by a central boss at the point where they meet.[1]

The frieze of the Louis XIV arm-chair is nearly always hidden by the upholstery, but sometimes the wood is left visible and decorated with a carved *campane* or scalloped motive.

The arms or *accotoirs* are usually of bare wood, nevertheless the stuffed *manchette*, which was to become general in the Regency period, made its appearance at the end of the eighteenth century. They are supported by straight uprights, sometimes turned balusters ;[2] or, preferably, they are moulded and curved to console shape : hence the name *consoles d'accotoirs*[3] given by upholsterers to these supports. The volute that invariably terminates the arm is part of it and not of the console, though certain arm-chairs,[4] thanks to a trick of the moulding, suggest the opposite effect. The appearance of these great wooden arms is not happy when they are too horizontal, and when their volute is not sufficiently developed ;[5] but they can be magnificent if they start high, have a free sweeping curve, and at the extremities expand into a wide volute generously carved out of a solid piece, and if their

1 Fig. 32.
2 Figs. 29 and 35.
3 Figs. 30, 31 and 32.
4 Fig. 28.
5 Fig. 29.

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moulding has been carefully designed and is in harmony with that of the console.[1] It is by no means uncommon to find examples that are admirably successful, and it is a genuine sensuous delight to run the hand over those ample mouldings, carried out with a firm and caressing tool, in walnut that has been polished by the wear of two hundred years. Not the least beautiful arm-chairs are those that have no other adornment than this refined moulding.

Simpler arm-chairs, made for the use of the modest middle classes, copy those we have just been describing in their general lines, but they are without carving or mouldings, and have all their "limbs" simply rounded. Very strong and solid, they have survived in considerable numbers two centuries of wear and of changing fashions, and are found nearly everywhere. In certain provincial parts they were called "crow's beak" chairs, or simply "crow chairs" (*chaises à bec de corbin* or *à corbin*) on account of the hooked shape of the end of their arms, an approximate copy of the volute.[2] These arm-chairs are by many dealers quite incorrectly called "Louis XIII arm-chairs"; they are pure Louis XIV and were often made in the middle of the eighteenth century. We shall see elsewhere that many of them display the characteristics of the Regency period.

The *bergère* seems only to have received its name in the early years of the personal reign of

1 Fig. 32. 2 Fig. 36.

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Louis XV, but it had long been in existence. The arm-chair of Fig. 33 is witness to this. Very embracing, very fully upholstered, more comfortable indeed than elegant, with its ears, its solid sides (*joues pleines*), and its movable cushion, this lumpish seat is like a badly reduced sketch of a "confessional" bergère. Under Louis XIV this was called a "confessional." The earliest examples had been actually made so that priests might listen in comfort to the sins of the faithful; the ears in that case were not stuffed; they were pierced with a kind of Judas hole or *jalousie*.

In reality the seat in question is only a very simple example of the *fauteuil de commodité*, which existed under other names ever since the sixteenth century for the convenience of old men, invalids, and languid ladies. Here is Furetière's definition: "We give the name of *chaise de commodité* to a well-stuffed chair, with a desk for reading and writing, and a ratchet to raise or lower the back at will, in which one can sleep or recline." Let us continue his description: two jointed arms, fixed in the desk, carried candles; large pockets allowed the invalid to have small articles within his reach; some had screens, and others, *à l'impériale*, had a dome and curtains.

Let us observe, to make an end of upholstered arm-chairs, the re-appearance of the low-backed arm-chair towards the end of the century in the shape of the *fauteuil à cœffer* (arm-chair for hair-

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dressing). The Duchesse de Bourgogne had one of this kind, covered in red damask "with velvet let in"; and we may note that the ancient *caquetoire* or "gossip" is always in favour. This was a little chair on low legs, easy to move about for gossiping, and highly appreciated by the ladies. A contemporary dictionary defined it as "a very low chair, with very high back and no arms, in which one can chatter at one's ease by the chimney-corner." But there were also *caquetoires* with arms, and *demi-caquetoires*, which were arm-chairs a little lower in the seat than usual.

There is but little to say of the backed chairs without arms, which came after the *chaises à vertugadin* or "farthingale chairs" of the early part of the century. Less common than the arm-chairs, they differed only in being without arms, their dimensions were much the same, the same back, the same legs, the same stretchers.[1]

One important invention of the upholsterers under Louis XIV was the sofa, which is, to say the truth, merely a rejuvenation of the bench, which had had so long and honourable a career in the middle ages. What Vadius was it who suggested to the master-upholsterer who "launched" the earliest sofas that goodly name *canapé*, so nobly drawn from the Greek—and mutilated in the process? Properly speaking, a *canapé*, or rather *conopée*, should be a bed with a mosquito netting. It may therefore be pre-

1 Figs 34, 37 and 38.

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sumed that the first *canapé* was a rest-bed, a piece of furniture meant for lying on and not sitting; and in fact, to speak by the book, a certain Monconys wrote in 1663 in his *Voyages*: "two *canapés*, these are forms with a back at each end." Now a form is a bench; and a bench with a back at each end is a rest-bed. An inventory of the time describes "a *canapé*, the wooden frame fitted with a mattress, and a wool mattress, with a feather bolster on top." In another we read, "a rest-bed *en canapé*, made up of two mattresses, two bolsters, two loose cushions and bed cover, to which are attached three valances." Some little time later, towards 1680, the word *sopha* made its appearance in the language, and seems to signify the same thing as the word *canapé*; it is useless to try to establish any distinction whatever between them. Originally then, it was a rest-bed with two *dossiers*, and presently there were three; and even before the earliest dawn of the Regency style we see veritable *canapés* in the modern sense of the word, that is to say, in short, very large arm-chairs for several persons, with a back and two arms. Furetière, in 1690, gives this definition: "a kind of backed chair, very wide, in which two persons can sit very comfortably. . . . The word is new to the language, and some say *sopha*." Henceforward the canapé or sopha, with arm-chairs to match, composes the classic suite of seats that has grown indissolubly wedded to the idea of a drawing-room. Thus, that

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dainty person, Nicolas Boileau Déspreaux, had in his chamber "a small sofa and two arm-chairs of gilded wood, fitted in leather, and covered with a silk stuff with silver flowers." Leather covered sofas were to be seen in nearly every billiard room. It is quite as superfluous for us to dwell upon the sofas as on the chairs of the period; their construction, like their decoration, is the same as that of the arm-chairs; many of them have, with their eight legs, the air of three arm-chairs joined in one. They were furnished with a movable mattress more frequently than with a nailed-on upholstered seat; but many of them have had their upholstery altered in the course of the centuries.

The *banquette*, which continues also to be called a "form," as in the fourteenth century, is a "bench of no great consequence placed in ante-chambers, porches, etc."; it is also a seat easy to move about, and useful as enabling a large number of persons to sit down in a small space. It was therefore constantly used[1] for fêtes, balls, concerts, and the like. The Versailles apartments were sometimes filled with them, and some were very costly and luxurious, gilded, stuffed with hair, and covered with the most valuable materials.

The *bancelle* might have a back and arms; most probably a very low back. *Bancelles*—far from handy to move, these particular ones!—figured among the prodigious solid silver furniture set the King kept at Versailles. One of them,

1 Bench seats could already be hired for this service.

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standing on eight pillar legs, weighed no less than 1,025 marcs 5 ounces, or 251 kilogrammes—a quarter of a ton of precious metal.

The *placet* or *tabouret* was a square-topped stool (occasionally round or oval), mounted on four legs, sometimes on X-shaped legs, stuffed (which distinguished it from the all-wooden *escabeau*), and, it might be, covered with tapestry or the finest stuffs, just as its frame might be of the costliest workmanship. At Versailles and Marly and Fontainebleau there were admirable examples, and no wonder, when they were so passionately sought after by Duchesses. And we have seen four tabourets at the Doucet sale in 1912, covered simply in plain velvet, fetch the wild figure of 28,500 francs.

We shall doubtless have exhausted the catalogue of seats when we have said a few words about folding stools, *pliants* or *ployants*. These too could be of rare magnificence—there were some at Versailles made of solid silver—and they were frequently more complicated than might be readily imagined. Some had a rigid frame, webbed and stuffed with hair like a fixed seat, others had arms and a back. One variety of folding chair was the *perroquet* or parrot, "a kind of chair with a back," says Furetière, "that folds, and which is generally used at the table." At a time when there were no dining-rooms, it was natural that for their meals people should have chairs easy to bring to table and to put away afterwards. Saint-Simon informs us that *perroquets* were

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also used to increase the number of possible places in a carriage.

We must not forget the *carreaux*, or more or less flat cushions, stuffed with horsehair or with down, which very often served as seats, when strict etiquette allowed you neither arm-chair nor chair nor folding-stool, or simply when all of them were lacking. A *carreau* planted on the floor was taken without ceremony for a seat "in the Spanish fashion"; or else several were piled on top of one another, a tottering edifice whose instability in those days, when rather coarse jesting was in fashion in every circle, lent itself to facetiousness of the most questionable taste. The Duchesse de Valentinois, as the amiable Madame de Villedieu tells us, had a "rocaille room adjoining her summer apartments, which was without a doubt the most delightful place in the world. It had no other furniture but piles of carreaux in gold cloth." Could we not almost imagine she was describing a little ultra-modern drawing-room in the twentieth century?

How were these various seats covered? With the same stuff or embroideries as the beds, if they formed part of the furniture set of a chamber such as we have described. In that case the seats were looked on as accessories to the bed; very often too a seat or a group of seats had its own private attire, without any relation, either in colour or material, to the other furniture. As they were constantly protected by means of loose covers of serge, or, in elegant interiors, of taffeta,

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morocco, even velvet or damask, and seeing that they were only "uncovered"—the regulation phrase—on rare occasions, people did not hesitate to dress them in the most delicate stuffs, of the most easily fading hues: gold brocade, white Chinese satin, yellow damask, flesh-coloured moire, aurora Genoa velvet with silver ground—we should have to enumerate afresh the whole catalogue of splendid stuffs on which the subjects of the Sun-King doted.

Sometimes one material only is used for a seat, sometimes two different silks are set side by side in stripes, or in compartments, in the same way as for the hangings of beds and walls; in this case the seams are covered with braiding of gold or silver or silk outlining the compartments; the same braid hides the little nails that fasten the stuff to the wooden frame, and is itself fastened down with large gilt or silvered decorative nails. The dress of the seat is often finished off with a long fringe of silk or wool running round the frieze and the lower edge of the back, when it is separated from the seat,[1] and by a *frangeon* or *molet*, an edging fringe the threads of which are too short to hang down. A further fringe in gold or silver might be placed above this. It is easy to recognise chairs that were meant to have a fringe, for just above the legs there is a plain strip of wood, almost left in the rough, so to say, underneath which the carving or mouldings begin; this part was to have been hidden by

1 Fig. 30.

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the fringe, which explains why it was not decorated.

It is obvious that all the different kinds of embroidery, gold or velvet, silken flowers or satin, pictures in "satin stitch" with figures, picked out in gold and silver, *taillure* embroidery (now known as appliqué), etc., heightened still more the beauty of the stately kind of seats. Others were covered with tapestry worked in wool and in silk on canvas in coarse or fine stitch; the subjects of these tapestries were large flowers (Fig. 31), *rinceaux* or grotesques. Women and girls, noble and middle-class alike, devoted to these labours a considerable part of their days, and Madame de Maintenon set the example to her "dear girls" of Saint-Cyr. We know that she worked at her tapestry while at the King's Council; and one of her contemporaries took this delicious "snapshot" of her one day, when he saw her setting out for a drive. "The lady was barely installed in her carriage, before the coachman had whipped up his horses, when she clapped her spectacles on her nose and pulled out the work she had in her bag." A *point de Hongrie*, or herring-bone stitch, was also in high favour, sometimes used by itself to cover the seats, sometimes applied in strips on a ground of plain colour. We remember how, in *l'Avare*, when Harpagon is unwittingly negotiating a usurious loan to his own son, he insists on making him take a thousand crowns in "*hardes, nippes et bïioux*," among which, along with the

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famous stuffed crocodile, there is "a four-foot bed with stripes of herring-bone needlework very neatly applied on an olive-coloured material, with six chairs and the counterpane to match; the whole in excellent condition and lined with a little shot red and blue taffeta." *Point de Chine* is something similar to *point de Hongrie*, but done with rounded horizontal undulations instead of sharp-angled chevrons, and the *point de Turque* is in vertical undulations. Boileau had in his cabinet an arm-chair and four chairs covered with tapestry in this "Turkey stitch."

It was at the end of the reign of Louis XIV that the first seats appeared covered with high warp or low warp tapestry, specially made for the purpose at Aubusson and Felletin, or at Beauvais.

Stuffs flocked with wool were also employed for this: they did not hesitate to cut up the finest Oriental carpets for the purpose; and la Savonnerie did its share in a much better way, by making pieces to measure and to order from the designs of Audran or Belin de Fontenay.

Seats meant for constant use were covered with commoner stuffs, such as *moquette* or *tripe*. Moquette or *moquade*, imported from England under the name of English carpeting, but which was also made in France, was in those days a hairy-surfaced stuff, knotted by hand; in short, a simplified kind of Savonnerie weave. *Moquette pied-court*, with shorter nap and smaller design—when there was any—than those meant for carpets underfoot, was used especially for covering

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seats, though it was also employed sometimes for ordinary hangings. For example, in the Château de Rambouillet there were, in 1706, a great number of arm-chairs, chairs and stools done in moquette, striped red, white and green, or red, blue and aurora; and the arm-chairs of the Académie Française (which, by the way, numbered thirty-six and not forty, as vacancies were very shrewdly counted upon), were modestly arrayed in moquette, at any rate after 1678, the date when the *service des Batiments* renovated them at a cost of ten livres ten sols apiece. The first Utrecht velvets, manufactured in Holland by Huguenot refugees, were called "Utrecht moquettes," although they were genuine goats' hair velvet, simply because they were used in the same way as moquette. *Tripe* was a velvet of wool on a hemp ground, also very lasting, in plain colours, and made in Flanders.

Lastly, there were common materials, known by the general name of *étoffes de la Porte*, because they were sold by the Paris gate,[1] were used to cover the seats in small rooms used as clothes closets, offices, servant's rooms, and the rooms of the lower middle classes. They included the various serges of Aumale, of Mony, etc.; the *damas cafart*, or false damask, which in wool and cotton simulated silk damask, as the "Bruges satin" copied the beautiful real satins as well as it could, and so on.

1 Or Châtelet gate, at the end of the rue Saint Denis, whence these cheap stuffs were also called "*étoffes de la rue Saint-Denis.*"

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Leather, while less in favour than in the preceding reigns, is still met with fairly often. We must not confuse seats *garnis de cuir* with those covered in leather. The former had their frame, both seat and back, stretched with thick leather instead of webbing; on this leather were laid or fastened square cushions filled with hair, "to keep them always well puffed out," and covered with silks. This is how we see them set down in inventories and in the reports of the affixing of seals: "a sofa done (*garni*) in leather, covered with crimson damask." Red, black or lemon morocco, or black calf, were used to cover seats intended to take their place in the most sumptuous chambers, as neighbours to arm-chairs in Venice brocatelle or Genoa velvet; or else they were covered in those gilded and gauffered leathers which made such magnificent wall coverings; they were covered lastly with bull's hide *martelé*, or decorated with little stamped ornamentations, or again *écorché*, incised and engraved; they were covered with leather *courtepointé*,[1] to make which a felt was placed between two skins of leather, and the whole stitched or quilted after elaborate designs.

The origin of caned seats is obscure. Among dealers in antiques—and the mistake has found its way into more than one book—the name of Louis XIII arm-chairs or chairs is given to caned seats with high backs, whose florid superabundant carving, and, in particular, the highly developed

1 This word is a corruption of *contrepointé*.

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blason, declare their unmistakably Flemish or Dutch origin.[1] They belong in reality to the Louis XIV period, and were not even imported into France until towards the end of the century, for there seems to be no mention of them in any authorities previous to 1690. Even the name for this new fashion of fitting seats was long in becoming fixed. In the *Livre commode*, of 1691, we read: "Turners who sell chairs *garnies de jonc et de paille* are chiefly to be found in the New Market." This certainly means chairs done with rattan; do we not still call a rattan cane a *canne de jonc*? Fifteen years later the inventory of the Chateau de Rambouillet records: "*a canapé de cannes* (*sic*)"—a "sofa of canes"; and in two inventories dated in the same year, 1722, we read in the one: "a lacquered chair of wild cherry wood and openwork *bois de canne*," and in the other: "six chairs *à jonc* in red wood." The foregoing quotations tell us all that is necessary; they were chairs "of little consequence," of beechwood or wild cherry lacquered or dyed red; they were made, not by the company of upholsterers but by that of the "master-turners and straw chair menders," which does not prevent their being made of good honest joinery, put together with tenons and mortices well and duly pinned, nor from being often very well carved and without any turning.[2] Caned arm-chairs and chairs were

1 It was the Dutch who introduced rattan into Europe.
2 Fig. 39.

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usually fitted with cushions covered with stuff and tied on to the chair with cords.

We have just seen that the turners made straw chairs. It seems as though these were hardly ever, in the first half of the century, seen out of kitchens or monastery cells. The admirable picture that Philippe de Champaigne painted in 1662 as a thank-offering, when his daughter was miraculously cured of a malignant fever in the convent of Port-Royal des Champs, shows us the young nun sitting in a rude straw arm-chair; another chair of the same kind is beside her. These chairs are of truly conventual simplicity; when they came among the laity they were called *chaises à la capucine*, but this did not prevent them from making their way into the richest interiors and in the end conquering a place at the Court. The surintendant Foucquet at Vaux, the maréchal d'Humières in his château, the Director General of Finance, Fleuriau d'Armenonville at Rambouillet, did not scorn these humble seats, which were in any case very comfortable when duly fitted with their horsehair and down cushions. Their wooden parts were very simply turned, and painted black, green, and red. There were some at Versailles: "six straw arm-chairs" are quoted in an inventory of the Crown furniture, "in Chinese lacquer, with cushions of red damask and their flounce of the same damask, with fringe and *molet* of gold and silver." Under the Regency Saint-Simon will write: "The princes

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and princesses had established themselves, towards the latter end of the late King, on little chairs with straw fittings, and without arms, in order to avoid offering arm-chairs, except when there was no way of dispensing with them . . . so that these little straw chairs, introduced under the pretext of their convenience for gaming or working, had in their lodgings become everybody's seats without discrimination." Toilet chairs, or *chaises à peigner*, were made of straw.

At the lowest point of the scale were the humble chairs all in wood, those of which Diderot will write in his Encyclopedia : "wooden chairs, such as were formerly used in middle-class houses, and are now, so to say, relegated to the garden." Here is one [1] of a Norman type, which is not lacking in richness, and discloses an obvious Dutch or Flemish influence; and here is the stout rustic chair [2] found everywhere in the Lorraine country. This model continued to be made by the turners of Lorraine and the Barrois country till well into the nineteenth century, but it could not have changed much for two and a half centuries.

1 Fig. 41.
2 Fig. 40.

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THIRD PART
THE REGENCY STYLE

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PART THREE: THE REGENCY STYLE

The so-called Regency style is hard to define, for it is a movement and not a stable condition of French decorative art; it can be told but not described. Where can it be seized? At what point of time? Under Louis XIV there was, so to say, a period of standing still, let us say from 1670 to 1690, if definite dates are desired, during which a style, shaped in the previous decade and now matured, had remained consistently itself. There were to be again, from about 1720 to 1760, and later from 1770 to 1790, two similar periods of stability—the years of the hey-day of the Louis XV and the Louis XVI styles respectively. But from 1690 to 1720 we were in full career between two halting points, and changes were incessant. It was so towards the end of Louis XIV, and much more so when he had disappeared. A regency is in its essence a period of the provisional, a moment of waiting and transition, everything is unstable. This was especially true of the regency of Philippe d'Orléans, who "adored everything novel" but settled on nothing, "incapable" as he was "of continuity or sequence in anything to such an extent that he could not even understand that such things were possible." It is impossible to draw a picture of what was

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then the French style, unless one could manage, like the so-called Futurists, to represent successive states on the same canvas: the utmost we could achieve would be to produce a series of snapshots. There is not a single line, not a motive in decoration that can be called specifically "Regency" in style. Some are Louis XIV elements slightly modified or used in a new way; others are already Louis XV, and what constitutes the Regency style is merely their finding themselves side by side (and in any case almost always with complete harmony), on the same piece of furniture, the same wainscoting, the same goldsmiths' work.

Away from Versailles, and in a different atmosphere, the Louis XIV style became modified, just like a plant transported to another climate. This air was already to be found, many years before 1715, in Paris, at the Palais Royal, where the family of Orléans lived, at the Temple, which was the home of the Vendômes, in coteries like that of the Marquise de Lambert, among powerful financiers who were amateurs and patrons of the arts, at Sceaux, where the little Duchesse de Maine sought to find distraction, and in many other free surroundings in which, aloof from and unknown to Louis XIV, a new spirit was developing which was to be the spirit of the eighteenth century. In that century everybody lived only for pleasure, the pleasure of the senses, sometimes of the most refined sort, sometimes pursued in drunken swinish orgies, even by the grandsons and granddaughters of kings, or the

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choicest pleasure of the intellect and the social amenities. An easy, gay life was eagerly sought after, and everything in the nature of constraint was loathed; things heretofore regarded as sacrosanct were subject to impertinent criticism; everybody delighted to be epicurean. Montesquieu knew this life in his youth, but soon broke away from it; Voltaire knew it, and remained for ever after as one intoxicated by the delicate delights he had tasted. "Nothing," he was to write later, "nothing is to be compared to the pleasant life there in the bosom of the arts, and of a tranquil, delicate voluptuousness; people from foreign countries and kings even preferred this idleness, so agreeably occupied and so enchanting, to their mother country and to their throne. . . . The heart softened and dissolved as aromatics melt gently on a slow fire and breathe out their souls in delicious odours." The pleasure of private conversation, intimate, unconstrained, yet carefully chosen, was felt at this moment with a rapture that is most strikingly shown in contemporary letters and memoirs. This is how, after many years, a frequent guest spoke of the dinners of Madame de Caylus, the delightful friend of Madame de Lambert: "She instilled into all her guests a joy so gentle and so keen, a feeling of such noble and elegant pleasure, that people of every age and every disposition appeared to be all amiable and happy alike." That is the perfume of the budding eighteenth century.

In this keener, yet at the same time balmier

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and warmer air, the severe Louis XIV style became softened, if we may use the phrase, and unbent. Its stiff lines were here and there discreetly inflected and broidered with a dainty vegetation: trailing plants entwined about them, and little flowery sprays shot off from them, and impudent monkeys clambered on to porticos to hang their swings from them.

It is easy to see that the craftsmen in stone, wood and metal no longer model themselves on the King's taste; they have to please a very miscellaneous clientèle, business folk grown wealthy, the contractors and the dancers whom they entertain, the *grand seigneurs* who are kind enough to come and enliven their mansions, all this set offer sacrifice to a new divinity, the fashion. Now the fashion is no longer for the stately and the heroic, but for the amiable and the gallant, and above everything for all that is convenient and agreeable. Two adjectives are more and more becoming stock phrases for anything pleasing, *agréable* and *joli*. The *grand* has become exceedingly stiff and pedantic. A monumental Louis XIV arm-chair may be *beau*, but nobody could call it *joli*. In a drawing-room there is nothing *agréable* about walls cased in marbles, coldly cut out in ovals, rectangles, and plat-bands. What people like from this moment is white wainscoting with fine gilded reliefs; they will have "mythologies" carved on it, and painted over the doors, but it will be[1] *Venus and*

1 At the Hotel de Soubise, in the princess's state chamber.

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Adonis, *Semele and Jupiter*, *Bacchus and Ariadne*, *Diana and Endymion*, and *the Graces presiding over the education of Love*. Round the most beautiful salon of the period[1] there will run a series of the romantic scenes of the *Loves of Psyche*.

These mythological themes were still to remain in favour for a long time as decorations for fine houses, and we know how much they were employed by the Coypels, La Moyne, and Natoire before the days of Boucher and his school—what other or what better pretext could there be for naked figures? But they were no longer completely sufficient. Something newer, something more amusing, more piquant, was sought for, and it was sought for in Asia and in the *Théâtre de la Foire*. Bedrooms and drawing-rooms remained the domain of rosy goddesses, but in the new style of small rooms, "conversation cabinets," "coffee cabinets," waiting for the appearance of "boudoirs," which was not to be long delayed, a whole little comic world suddenly took possession of the walls, just like the entrance of masqueraders in a fancy dress ball.

We have shown how even Versailles in all its heroic glory had opened its doors to quantities of Chinese fabrics and articles. But these were only movable things, that would have vanished in a turn of the hand if the fashion had changed;

1 The oval drawing-room in the same hôtel. The paintings were only finished by Natoire in 1739; but the whole decoration was conceived by Boffrand more than twenty years earlier.

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never till now had China been embodied in permanent decorations. This final seal of approbation began to be conferred from the end of the seventeenth century, for Monsieur had a Chinese room at Saint Cloud in 1690, and it was ratified and established in the early years of the next century, in which the sons of Heaven were to be seen finding their place even in tragedy, since Voltaire ventured on the *Orphelin de Chine*, the "Chinese Orphan"! The very "cabinet du Roi," in the Château de la Muette, was a Chinese cabinet, known as "de la Chine," for strangely enough the adjective *chinois* was not to come into current use until the end of the eighteenth century. We have a series of engravings of this cabinet, which was by no means unworthy of being ascribed, as for a long time it was, to the great Watteau.

The Far East was beginning to be a little better known, thanks to the narratives of certain eminent travellers, Tavernier, who had been to Turkey, Persia, and the Indies; Chardin, who had visited India and Persia; thanks also to those embassies that were so successful from the point of view of interest; that from Siam, in 1686,[1] and later, the Persian embassy, by which, if Saint-Simon is to be believed, the old King allowed himself to be hoaxed like a simple M. Jourdain. And so in the same way as *chinoiseries*, *turqueries* and *persaneries*, began to be all the

1 It is true that the Prime Minister of the King of Siam was called the *Grand Vizier!*

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fashion in literature and in the theatre. Galland translated the *Thousand and One Nights*, Dufresny points out the way to Montesquieu, with his *Amusements sérieux et comiques d'un Siamois*. As for the decorators, they painted, in the midst of panels of fantastic architecture and impossible flowers, Turks of every kind, sultans and odalisques, muphtis with monstrous turbans, dervishes with long robes; but none of them was much more authentically Turkish than the *Bourgeois gentilhomme* when he was made Mamamouchi. They painted Hindoos, but Hindoos that came out of the *Indes Galantes*, Persians no more Persian than Usbeck and Rica, and above everything and at every point they painted Chinese. And these Chinese brought with them the appropriate accessories, dragons, parasols, peacock feathers, towers with turned up roofs, humpy bridges, strange rocks, old rotted stumps of willow-trees, with the light showing through holes: motives that before long entered into every kind of decoration, Chinese or not, and mingled with the classic Louis XIV motives. The Chinese parasol cut in two, which frequently occurs in Watteau's decorative panels, probably was the origin of the "bat's wing" motive.

At the same time as all these outlandish doll figures, the new way of decoration scattered broadcast almost over everything, from hand-screens to wainscoting, and from snuff-boxes to great tall many-leaved screens, that gay, exquisite fairy-like humanity, the *dramatis personæ* that

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Watteau created with his poetic genius out of the elements he found in the Comédie italienne. The Italian players, who were then at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, were brutally expelled in 1697 for having dared to announce a piece called *La Fausse prude*: could such a title belong to anything but a personal satire against Madame de Maintenon? But Paris loved its Italians, Arlequin and Scaramouche, Colombine and Silvia, Mezzetin, the endless serenader, and Gilles, ever livid, pale, and abashed. The actors of the booths at the fairs took up the French pieces of the Italian mummers, and when he became Regent, one of the first things Philippe d'Orléans did was to recall them. Gillot painted and engraved them from life, Watteau transfigured them and gave them immortality, conferring on them French nationality at the same time. Last of all, we may remind ourselves of the simian tribe and their frolics, already introduced by Bérain into his grotesques. All these are the far from grave or stately themes with which the new decoration was to be inspired.

We must go into a few details as to the softening and mellowing of the Louis XIV style. Symmetry continued to be respected, until *Rocaille* came in and wantonly turned everything topsy turvy, but it was only symmetry horizontally considered; vertically there were, for example, hardly any regular wainscoting panels or doors to be seen.[1] Rectangular mouldings

1 Figs. 42 and 43.

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were still employed as framings for these panels, but they are less important, finer, and less strong in relief; and inside this frame everything was emancipated and softened, the right angles are masked by being hollowed out, or with a shell, or a floret motive; the stiffness of the mouldings is broken up by a ribbon,[1] or by an acanthus motive twining in a spiral about a bundle of reeds, or by a line of beading;[2] or light motives starting out of the frame are embossed on the plain surface of the panel.[3] If a panel is arched at the top, the arch is divided into two C-shaped motives ending in a crook,[4] often separated by a floret, a *palmette*, or a shell.[5] The "*cintre à ressauts*" loses its ressaults and becomes the continuous "hat"-shaped or S-shaped curve, said to have been invented by Cressent as far as its use on a pediment is concerned.[6] At other points this line becomes modified in various ways.[7] The bottom of panels, very frequently in wainscoting, occasionally in articles of furniture,[8] was bounded by a line composed of two S-curves set end to end.[9] A little later there was adopted, for the top of panels of furniture with two doors, the un-

1 Fig. 43.
2 Fig. 43.
3 Fig. 43.
4 Fig. 10.
5 Fig. 42 (inner framing of the top panel), and Fig. 50.
6 Fig. 47.
7 Fig. 45 (the bottom panel), and Fig. 49.
8 Fig. 10.
9 This same line is found on the uppermost edge of the head and foot of the bed in Fig. 60.

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symmetrical shape[1] that was to be one of the most unvarying characteristics of the Louis XV style, and retained even right into the nineteenth century by country joiners in all the provinces. At the same time, the top of cupboard or sideboard doors sometimes assumed an incurved shape.[2]

The C-shaped motive, the simple "basket-handle" (*anse de panier*) of former days, was modified and became the *haricot* motive beloved of the Louis XV style. We have already seen it making its appearance on panelling that was still "very Louis XIV": for instance, in the central rosette of the panel in Fig. 1. The outer edge of the *haricot* or bean became denticulated, pinked, pleated, or goffered; it is like that of certain shells, the murex or the limpet.[3] This denticulation sometimes tapers out and curves in such a way that it becomes impossible to tell whether it is a wing, a flame, or a spaniel's tail. A lozenge pattern with a tiny flower or dots was always a favourite as a ground decoration;[4] it obeys the law of general softening; the lines defining the lozenges are often flattened curves, and the lozenges diminish towards one side.

We have already had occasion to call attention to the motives taken from living creatures that

1 Fig. 48: top of the doors of the upper part.
2 Fig. 47.
3 Pediment of sideboard, Fig. 48, top of doors of sideboard Fig. 50.
4 Table in Fig. 59, chairs in Figs. 71 and 72.

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made their appearance at this moment, the *espagnolettes* of the Watteau style, found at the head of the legs of tables, the top corners of screens, in certain elaborate motives of keyhole escutcheons;[1] the monkeys which are ever readily employed to finish off the upright sides of frames;[2] the dragons which, by reason of their unreality and their arbitrary shape, constitute a priceless resource for hard pressed decorators: they are to be found especially in the somewhat lax compositions of the Rocaille style. The great Cressent, however, has made use of them. The shell motive is no less frequent than in the Louis XIV style, but it is elaborated, pierced, and modified in many ways.[3]

The acanthus leaf continues to render excellent service; it is often lengthened and more indented, less broad than previously; it attains the highest pitch of suppleness. A "feuille d'eau" (water leaf), as though folded double and seen in profile, with vaguely waved edge, and ribs strongly marked or replaced by grooves, serves as accompaniment to the edge of the friezes of tables or simple chairs.[4] Light flowerets scatter themselves almost everywhere, flowers of no definite species, with four or five petals; and convolvuli go clambering over the mouldings. The most

1 Fig. 54.
2 Fig. 85.
3 See, for instance, the three large shells pierced with holes in the original and charming sofa shown in Fig. 75.
4 The same sofa of Fig. 75, on each side of the tops of the legs; arm-chair, Fig. 74.

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current, the "stock" motive of the period, is the upright shell, from whose base start two long acanthus sprays.[1]

The taste for attributes goes on increasing. They become less heroic and more familiar: gardening tools, implements of pastoral life, of the chase and fishing, of music and other arts; there are, of course, the arms and symbols of Love—torches, wreaths of roses, bows, arrows and quivers.

As for technique, we must report the almost complete abandonment for a time of ebony, which was to recover a certain amount of favour under Louis XVI. The old master, André Charles Boulle, went on, however, building his sumptuous marquetry pieces, and his sons after him, for certain amateurs of austere tastes prided themselves on having a few specimens in their *cabinet* or collection;[2] Boulle pieces were the only articles of a past style that were sought after throughout the whole of the eighteenth century. That period, indeed, was wholly innocent of "antiquomania," to the greater benefit of art and artists; it was far too creative to contract this disease. But the fashion was frankly for veneering and marquetry in exotic woods, with appliques of gilt bronze; and particularly for amaranth wood, which is a winy red kind of

1 Table, Fig. 59. Arm-chairs, Figs. 70, 73, 77, etc.

2 This is a third meaning attached to the word "cabinet": a collection of curiosities and works of art. People spoke of the *cabinet Crozat*, the *cabinet la Live* rather than the *galérie*.

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mahogany, and for violet wood, of a violet brown with well defined lighter veining.

The bronzes of the Regency style, for example those of Cressent's most successful models, have one very great merit, the same as those of the Louis XV period, when the cabinet-maker did not let himself be drawn away into an exaggerated display of richness; a merit of which the Louis XVI bronzes fall short, and which was only half attained by those on Boulle pieces. This merit consists in the fact that they serve some definite purpose; they are not mere ornaments; each one has its reason for existing, and for being just where it is. Let us examine one of those admirable flat bureaux by Cressent, for example, the masterpiece now in the Louvre after long service at the Ministère de la Guerre. For bronzes it has a *quart de rond** reinforced at the corners, running round the top, of great efficacy to protect an exposed edge from knocks; enframing mouldings on the front of the drawers, which strengthen the joints of a part that has much work to do; handles (*mains**) which are indispensable to pull out the drawers conveniently; keyhole escutcheons to prevent the keys from damaging the wood; large bronzes fixed to the inner side of the permanent frame of the drawers on each side; they soften an arris that might endanger the legs of the person seated at the bureau; at the top of each leg there is an *espagnolette*, forming a *chute* or drop, and protecting the most projecting part of the legs; a

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fine fillet running the whole length of the arrises of the legs, to keep the veneer from being ripped off just where it runs most danger, since the films of thin wood meet there at an angle ; and lastly, *chaussons* or *sabots*, casings covering the extremities of the legs, and fulfilling this same purpose of protection.

More carving is to be seen on modest furniture: the copious moulding of the Louis XIII and Louis XIV styles, so well calculated to accentuate the great straight lines, is hardly attractive now, and no longer seems sufficient decoration for a cupboard or a buffet to which a certain finish has been given.

* * * * * *

It remains for us to review briefly, with comments on our illustrations, the different items of furniture, such as were made for simple business people, perhaps already for well-to-do country folk, in what we have allowed to pass as the "Regency period"; but we have no hesitation in repeating once again that any classifications into the Louis XIV style, the Regency style, the Louis XV style, are purely arbitrary and in no way correspond with an exact chronology. We are fully persuaded, for example, that nearly all, if not all, of the panelled furniture reproduced in this volume, which may legitimately be labelled "Regency" for its hybrid style, was made after 1723 by provincial joiners who never followed at the heels of fashion.

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Cupboards still continued to show the majesty and the calm lines of the Louis XIV style; their vertical arrises were rounded off;[1] the cornice was straight, less important, sometimes already *en chapeau*; vertical symmetry had disappeared, and the bottom frequently displayed lines that were frankly Louis XV: the lower traverse in front was heavily festooned in a complicated design, and the feet are "doe's feet" (*pied de biche*).[2] This is an error in taste; by true rules —and the rule here is simply logic—the upper parts of a monument, for these are veritable monuments, should be lighter, airier, so to say, than the base, and may be less simple; here it is the contrary, and these curved and elegant feet are somewhat slender to support such a mass, or at any rate they convey that impression to the eye. This goes some way to spoil the superb cupboard from Provence, seen in Fig. 44, the doors of which are carried out to perfection, with their fine carvings setting off so well the handsome outline of the plain panels. The Lorraine cupboard of Fig. 46, fairly rustic in character, has something harsh and angular about it, which is, if one may say so, racy of the soil.

Let us note that the whole façade of certain large furniture was carved, doubtless in imitation of the façades of commodes. This is a strange refinement in the case of modest pieces,[3] for it

1 Figs. 44 and 46.
2 Figs. 44 and 46.
3 Fig. 47.

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greatly increases the difficulty of the work and the quantity of material needed; but in the eighteenth century both craftsmanship and materials were cheap! Dresser-sideboards made their appearance in the provinces, for the bright colours and great decorative value of earthenware, which was then being manufactured in abundance, speedily inspired the desire to display it when not in actual use. The handsomest are to be found in the east of France: tall, wide—often much wider than their height—elaborate, very convenient, they combine in one highly architectural simple piece the cupboard, the commode, and the set of shelves.[1] In the western provinces they are narrower, simpler, with a rather shabby upper part,[2] but always very useful to give a country dining-room the gaiety we delight in, and also, be it said, to satisfy our mania for display. Have we not, indeed, demonstrated that where porcelain is concerned this mania was at least as great two centuries ago as it is to-day?

The coffer ends its once glorious career obscurely in the depths of the country districts. Even the country people themselves began to discard it more and more, and the latest examples are nearly always without decoration.[3] And yet there are still a few interesting ones to be found in Brittany and the Vosges, which are strongly marked with the characteristics of the period.

1 Fig. 49.
2 Fig. 50.
3 Figs. 52 and 53.

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The commode was given a new shape, which in a slightly improved version was to continue until the coming of the Louis XVI style; this was the shape known as "the Regency."[1] Let us note, by the way, that it was at this period that names began to be given to the various varieties of furniture: a proof that these varieties were becoming numerous, and also that furniture had entered the realms of fashion. Thus, there appear for a moment certain sub-species, commodes *à la Chartres*, *à la Bagnolet*, *à la Charolais*, and others besides. The Regency commode is massive and bulging, its lines are heavy, its rotundities are excessive; the Louis XV period will correct this and bring it to perfection. Under the marble top, a first stage of one or two drawers has a concave façade, the middle stage is strongly convex, the lower part is curved back, which gives the whole a "doe's foot" (*pied de biche*) outline, but with an exaggerated projection of its convex curve, which is also placed too low down. The sides show the same swelling line: to be completely truthful, it is ugly. The design is not so contorted in plane as in profile; the façade is slightly rounded. The bronzes are rich and appropriately abundant. These commodes all have the air of having been made for the profiteers of the rue Quincampoix. How much more elegant are those which were satisfied with a plain vertical front, slightly curved, and

1 Fig. 54.

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perpendicular sides![1] The one here reproduced has bronzes that are frankly "rocaille," but the handles, which now are fixed and no longer hanging, still have a certain symmetry. It is to be observed that commodes of this period show their division into stages very clearly marked (often by a heavy horizontal groove lined with brass), a thing that is too often lacking in the periods that follow.

Clocks may well figure here, with panelled furniture, for at the end of the seventeenth century they became real pieces of furniture. The invention of the pendulum by Huyghens, about the middle of the century, had brought about an enormous increase in the numbers of clocks by making them infinitely more accurate. Small table clocks had disappeared, because people began to carry watches, and *religieuses*, or clocks meant to be fixed against the wall, had taken their place. These had a short pendulum and a spring, in which case they were set on a bracket or a pedestal against the wall, or had weights, in which case they were carried on a little shelf pierced with holes to let the cords run through. When the long pedulum became common, it needed protection as well as the weights, and so the box containing the works and the pedestal that carried it were united: the tall clock was born and very soon became common; it was, and still is, when it has not been sold to some antique dealer and replaced by the horrible

1 Fig. 55.

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American or German alarm clock, the modest luxury of the homes of our peasants. Among all the objects that surround it the clock is the only one endowed with movement, and, in a sort, with life; and a deep instinct impelled the first makers of these tall cased clocks to make that life as manifest as possible. Hence the window that allows us to see the solemn swinging to-and-fro of the great pendulum with its disc of shining brass. The cases of Louis XIV and Regency clocks generally have vertical sides, but are sometimes given a more elegant and expressive shape, outlining the figure traced in space by the movement of the pendulum. The case most frequently terminates above in an arched pediment, sometimes flanked by two little vases or spike ornaments in brass.[1]

At the end of the reign of Louis XIV tables became lighter and simpler, in obedience to the general tendency to make everything that has no imperative reason for being big and heavy smaller and easy to handle. Florentine stonework is out of fashion, and for costly drawing-room tables people prefer a top of one single slab of fine marble, portor, Aleppo breccia, Antin marble. Wall consoles retain their elaborate structure; they must have extremely rich ornamentation, because they are placed at the foot of a pier glass, and under the panel of a reflecting mirror they must needs play the part of a *cul-de-lampe*, or tail piece answering to the

1 Figs. 56 and 57.

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painted or carved ornamentation above the mirror. But tables to stand out in the room, even when they are of great size, no longer have stretchers.

No more "twisted legs"; turnery is despised. No more pedestal legs; the straight line is beginning to be a bore. Console legs become simpler and similar to *pieds de biche*, which themselves assume more slender, more elegant lines. Until the Louis XVI style did away with this elegant shape, it was indiscriminately known as console leg or doe's foot leg. These table legs, and the same applies to the legs of chairs, are set obliquely and not *en façade*; to speak more accurately—the reader will kindly excuse these pedantic phrases—their median plane is oblique with reference to that of the façade, instead of being at right angles to it. Let us for the sake of simplicity call them "oblique legs." Their lines join up with those of the frieze by an unbroken moulding. The *pied de biche*, instead of ending with the shape of a cloven hoof, begins to be terminated by a little volute, a last memory of the console, standing on a cube, and with an acanthus leaf springing up from it. The *chute*, or drop at the top of the leg, is a *palmette* or a shell, from which starts a leaf, an acanthus floret, or a plaited motive. The contour of the frieze is more or less shaped with S-curves alternating with C-curves. The two little tables reproduced here[1] are, in sum, completely Louis XV in their

1 Figs. 58 and 59.

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lines, and still Louis XIV by their carved decoration.

The state bed still continued its existence, like the love of costly stuffs, but it is a kind of sumptuousness that is drawing near its end. Henceforth there are a salon or two—the great drawing-room and the *salon de compagnie*, which is smaller and more intimate—or even more, for the reception of guests, and a dining-room, so that no one is impelled by vanity to spend enormous sums on a bed. As rooms are now smaller, less open to the winds and better heated, it is no longer essential that the bed should be hermetically enclosed. And so, little by little, it ceased to be a four-poster, first in Paris and later at Versailles, where the sovereigns had bed-chambers that were truly arctic. It was not until 1743 that Marie Leczinska had a "duchess"-shaped summer bed—we know this from the Duc de Luynes, who would never have left such a change unrecorded in his diary—and in winter she continued to sleep in a four-poster. The bed in the King's chamber remained a four-poster until the Revolution. The general adoption of the duchess-bed and the angel-bed brings about the reappearance of beds with the wood showing, which sometimes have head and foot boards of the same height;[1] but as a rule the angel-bed has the foot-board lower than the head. These beds with the wood showing are

1 Fig. 60. The sunk lozenge on the cartouche above the *dossier* is the *macle*, the chief emblem in the arms of the Rohans.

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in any case very rare, and other kinds have not been preserved. Altogether, hardly any beds of the Regency period have come down to us.

It is quite different with regard to chairs, which are still very numerous. We are given the impression that Louis XIV chairs and arm-chairs suddenly, almost over-night, were regarded as old rubbish and replaced, so to speak, in a lump, more quickly than other furniture, because they were less costly and were more directly connected with the desire for comfort then becoming general. It was with them as with the tables, they became smaller, lighter, easier to move about, and, above all, more comfortable. The study of arm-chairs gives us the most complete scale of intermediate shades between the pure Louis XIV style and that of Louis XV. At one end is the great arm-chair, immovable or nearly so, rectilinear, geometrical, curling up its volutes with all the emphatic rhetoric of a Fléchier rolling out his periods, and seeming to say to you: "Go your ways, you that are neither Duke nor Peer!" and at the other end of the scale the little Louis XV *cabriolet* chair, wholly inviting, all in supple elusive lines, the back snugly embracing your shoulders, its wood everywhere visible, made to be moved with one hand without interrupting the conversation; between these two is every imaginable hybrid shape.

Here is one,[1] which with everything else in the style has a back slightly lower and with a

1 Fig. 61.

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tendency to be "hat"-shaped; here one[1] with the volutes of the arms atrophied, and another with none at all; here are the *manchettes* (pads)[3] to soften the hardness of the arms; and here[4] is a great change, on which we may pause for a moment, the first arms set back on the seat. In 1717 there arrived, from England, it is said, the fashion of panniers. "These panniers are a frame of whalebone, or sometimes of wicker, covered with linen and put by women under their skirts, and by men in their coat-skirts, to keep them stiff and standing out. The machine is considerably developed at each side of the wearer, but very little at front and back, so that a lady with her slender waist and huge panniers looks like a washerwoman's paddle." The poor women bundled up with this were never able to find room in an arm-chair; so they were perforce reduced to chairs, as their great-great-grandmothers had been by their farthingales. A gallant upholsterer of an ingenious turn devised the remedy: he set back the consoles of the arms, and the panniers could spread themselves at their own sweet will on the front of the chairs. This other arm-chair[5] displays an ornamented band fitted on to its frieze (hence the disappearance of fringes), and the sides of the seat curve inwards. This one is still further advanced in evolution,

1 Fig. 62.
2 Fig. 69.
3 Fig. 65.
4 Fig. 62.
5 Fig. 65.

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with its obliquely set doe's foot legs, and the frieze itself covered with carving; these others[1] have boldly discarded stretchers, and yet the first one has not yet arrived at set-back arms, and neither of them has arm pads. If chairs are now able to dispense with stretchers, it is because they are less heavy and glide easily over wooden floors and carpets, while heretofore their feet were continually catching on the rough squares of stone pavements. Lastly, here is a chair[2] with its back showing the wood, and all curved at the top, and corners almost turned up Chinese fashion. The characteristic of the Louis XIV style that persists longest was the rectilinear sides of the back; we may say that when an arm-chair or a chair has a fiddle back, *i.e.*, with uprights bending in towards the centre line, it is no longer Regency but frankly Louis XV.

Besides the great "confessional" chair with ears and solid sides,[3] which still continues to exist, there gradually takes shape the *bergère* type. Here is one (Fig. 74) which is interesting in that it clearly shows the new taste for clearly defined outlines in visible wood. Sofas (*canapés* or *sophas*), which were rare in the preceding period, become common; from their original prototype, the rest-bed with two ends, definitely emerges the sofa, which is a very wide arm-chair, or rather, something like an amalgamation of

1 Figs. 69 and 70.
2 Fig. 72.
3 Fig. 73.

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three arm-chairs, which are still easily to be traced in it at this period.[1]

Cane chairs were in high favour, as is proved by the surprising numbers that still survive. In summer these light, cool chairs were left bare, or were simply fitted with a flat "carreau," or squab cushion. What shows that they were all meant to have this is the little cube-shaped piece of wood left uncarved at the lower end of the arm consoles; the cushion was notched at the front corners, and kept in place by ribbons tied so as to hide this rough place. When winter came a complete upholstery set was slipped over the chair like a loose cover, or else a second cushion was tied on to the back with ribbons. In spite of their humble materials, for they are made of beechwood, painted or plain, they sometimes show very delicate carving,[2] especially on the backs. The cane sofa, of which a photograph is given,[3] is of an uncommon type. It has an unusually elegant basket motive repeated three times on the back. The two chairs in Figs. 79 and 81 indicate the limits within which the curve of the *pied de biche* might vary. The happy choice of this curve, the proportions of the various parts, the skilful harmonising of the carved motives to the masses they decorate, make excellent examples of joiners' work of the legs of the quite simple bench shown in Fig. 83.

* * * * * *

1 Figs 75 and 76.
2 Fig. 78.
3 Fig. 76.

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Taken all in all, Regency furniture is much more capable of pleasing us, and is much better adapted to our modern homes than that of the Louis XIV style. The reason is that towards 1720 the great transformation had been very nearly completed, the change that was to make our forefathers' way of living very different from that of the preceding generation, and on the whole so similar to our own.

Louis XIV furniture was made to satisfy the very pronounced taste for show of people who were nevertheless still crude, and had no notion or need of the comfort that has become so essential in our eyes. Everything else was sacrificed to a magnificent and sumptuous exterior. While it is not at all a chimerical project, given taste, patience and the proper financial means, to re-establish a country house or a small château built under Louis XV or Louis XVI in its original condition, and live in it very pleasantly both summer and winter, who could ever dream of reconstituting accurately an interior of the days of Louis XIV? It would be uninhabitable.

How then can we find a use for furniture of this style? It is almost an impossible task as far as flats in Paris are concerned: it is too huge in dimensions and its aspect far too lacking in intimacy. But for certain purposes, in a large country house, it would be without a rival. Above all, we should take advantage of its high decorative value, the happy way it "peoples" big spaces, and how its lines harmonise with those of large

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and simple architecture. Nothing could be more at home in the porch of an unpretentious château than one of those immense cupboards of dark walnut with rich mouldings, whose fine lights alternate with the deepest of shadows; or than a marble-topped table, solidly fixed upon its four baluster legs, with their cross-pieces by way of stretcher, and a number of arm-chairs with tall rectangular backs, all drawn up by the wall like lifeguardsmen on parade. But for heaven's sake let no one have them covered with bits of old Flanders verdure, which were never made for such a fate!

A large salon furnished in the Louis XIV manner—without the state-bed, of course!—would be a pretty difficult thing to achieve, though very interesting, since it would have to be completely in keeping. These articles of furniture are of a nature that will not accommodate itself to all surroundings. They agree very well with the Louis XIII style, for the Louis XIV style is, after all, only the Louis XIII enriched and refined, or with the Regency style, since it is derived from the Louis XIV by imperceptible degrees. But they clash with the furniture of the eighteenth century: the two styles differ in the mere scale of size, in their range of colours, and in their lines. The only things that could keep house tolerably peacefully with them would be very large pieces of the Louis XVI style, under-cupboards or great "wall-pieces," certain massive tables or consoles, simply

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because the master lines in both are straight, and the few curves they admit are similar in each style; and both alike borrow the elements of their ornamentation from antiquity.

Here is an imaginary sketch of such a great country house drawing-room. On the walls, failing tapestries, which would of course be the ideal thing, and if they are not already panelled or wainscoted, there should be a quite simple plain hanging; for the silk stuffs of the seventeenth century were much too sumptuous to make it possible for modern imitations to take their place;[1] and a decoration of wide bands of two glaring colours would be hard for modern eyes to accept. On the floor as many Eastern carpets as you please. For the big pieces of furniture there should be one or two cupboards, but preferably Louis XIII pieces in two parts, with a pediment; in upholsterers' parlance, they "are more drawing-room" than the Louis XIV cupboards; then two under-cupboards or two commodes, forming a pair as nearly as possible—we must never forget that symmetry is a cardinal law of the style. Tables dating from the end of the seventeenth century, with pedestal or console legs, are not easily come by; but they might be replaced by those tables with twisted legs, which may be Louis XIII style if you like, but which were almost all made under Louis XIV, or even by rectangular tables of any kind, provided

1 Unless we could get hold of crimson damask that was not too *cafard*, as our fathers used to say.

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they are hidden under those valanced covers that hang down to the floor and obligingly conceal everything—even to a husband, to whom it is wished to reveal the attacks to which his wife is exposed, as in *Tartuffe*. A sofa will be practically indispensable, so let us have one of the Louis XIV side of the Regency style rather than the Louis XV end. As for the other seats, the bulk of them will be made up of large Louis XIV arm-chairs. After all, we have no perukes to humour, and if you lean frankly up against their backs you won't be at all badly seated. But you will, out of mere necessity, have to supplement them with some handier chairs. You will find these in turned Louis XIII chairs, or in those excellent caned arm-chairs and ordinary chairs of the Regency, which can easily be obtained, and which you can equip with cushions made of bits of old stuff. Lastly, there will be stools, benches with pedestal legs, and why not *carreaux* (floor-squabs) on their *porte-carreaux*, since the young women and girls of to-day affect to sit on the ground, just as Madame's maids of honour used to do, imagining that it is the last word in modernity ?

As for the lighting, there must be a crystal chandelier ; branched sconces with mirror plaque make a very charming mural decoration, but they are rare ; and in default of those great tall torch candleholders of gilded wood, which are not precisely common objects at sales or in dealers' shops, you will place girandoles on

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guéridons with twisted legs. If you wish to hang your pictures in the true seventeenth century way, you must hang them flat against the wall, by two silk or gold-thread cords, dropping vertically from the cornice and relieved with one or two big tassels of passementerie, through which they will be passed. These cords might also start from two ringed staples, fixed in the wall about two feet above the top of the frame, and disguised under two big tassels. Lastly, all the little decorative odds and ends can quite correctly, as we have seen, be Chinese, Hindoo, or Persian, at your pleasure. It would be amusing—without going quite so far as the tinned glass *boule de jardin*—to reconstruct a chimney set of china ornaments, laid out on shelves or tiny gilded consoles; but before undertaking this you must think over the trouble of taking care of it all. . . .

We will pause at this example and leave to our readers the pleasure of making other combinations[1] with those handsome, excellent pieces of furniture of two centuries ago—a little inconvenient perhaps, but such speaking witnesses to a period when France became, as in many another thing, the foremost nation of Europe in the art of beautifying the homes of human beings.

1 For instance, a Regency dining-room, with a big dresser-sideboard from Lorraine, an under-cupboard as a serving table, and for seats, cane chairs of painted wood or those high-backed chairs covered with *moquette*, in stripes of three colours, which are to be seen in Chardin's pictures.

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FIG. 1. CUPBOARD DOOR, OAK

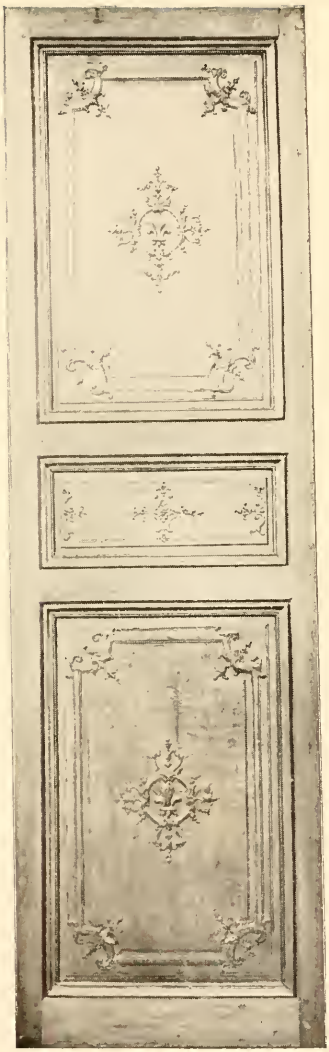

FIG. 2. OAK DOOR LEAF

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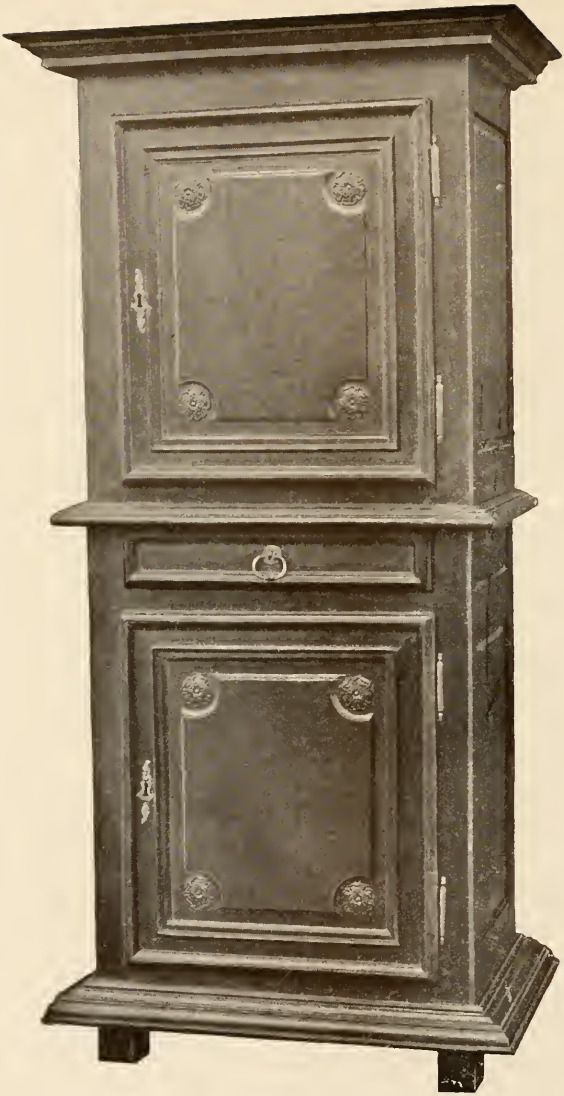

FIG. 3. SMALL CUPBOARD IN TWO PARTS, IN OAK

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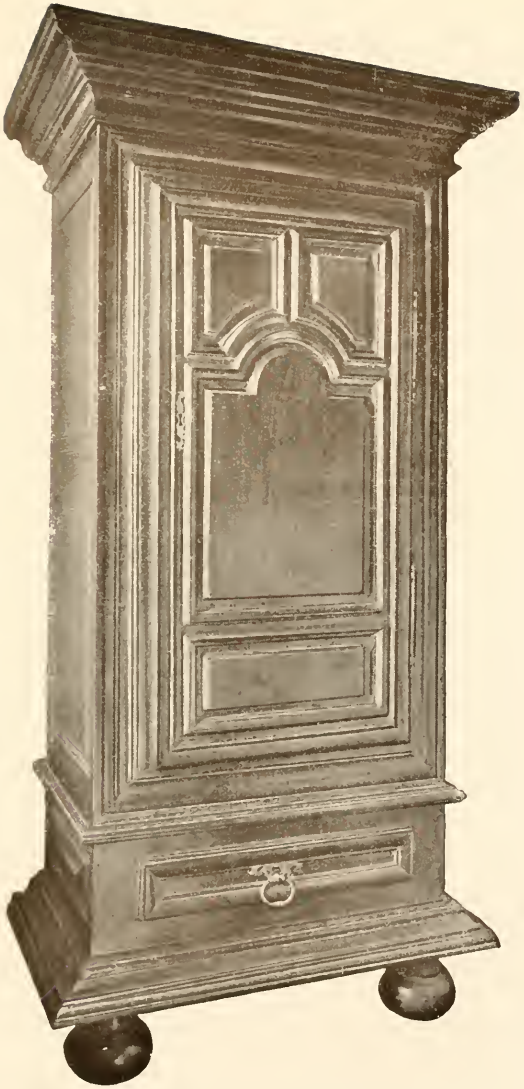

FIG. 4. WALNUT CUPBOARD WITH ONE DOOR AND A DRAWER, FROM THE SOUTH-WEST OF FRANCE

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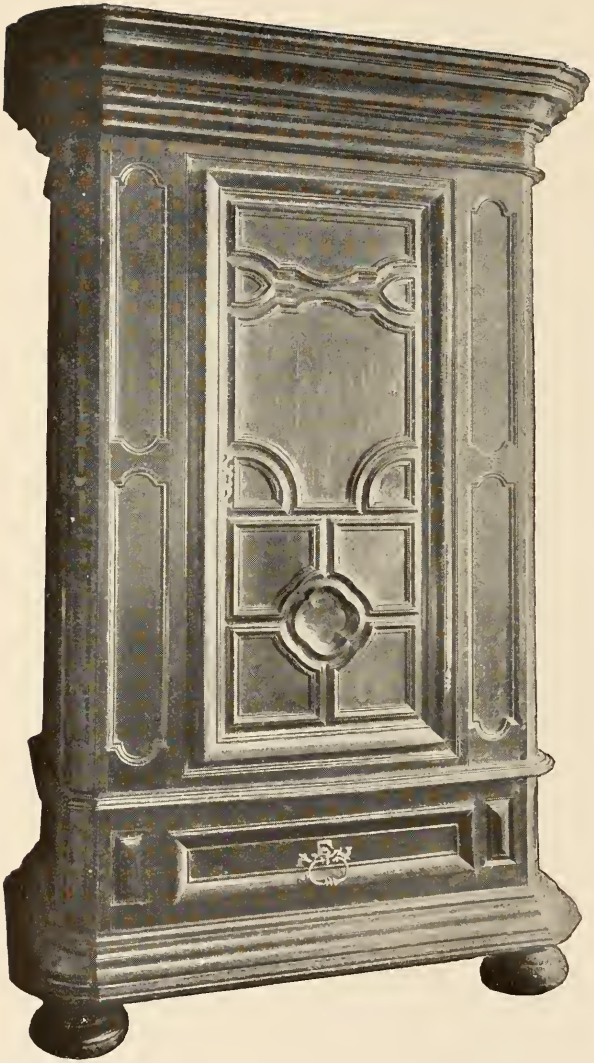

FIG. 5. CUPBOARD WITH ONE DOOR AND NEUTRAL PANELS AT THE SIDES, IN WALNUT, FROM THE SOUTH-WEST

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Fig. 6. NORMAN CUPBOARD, OAK

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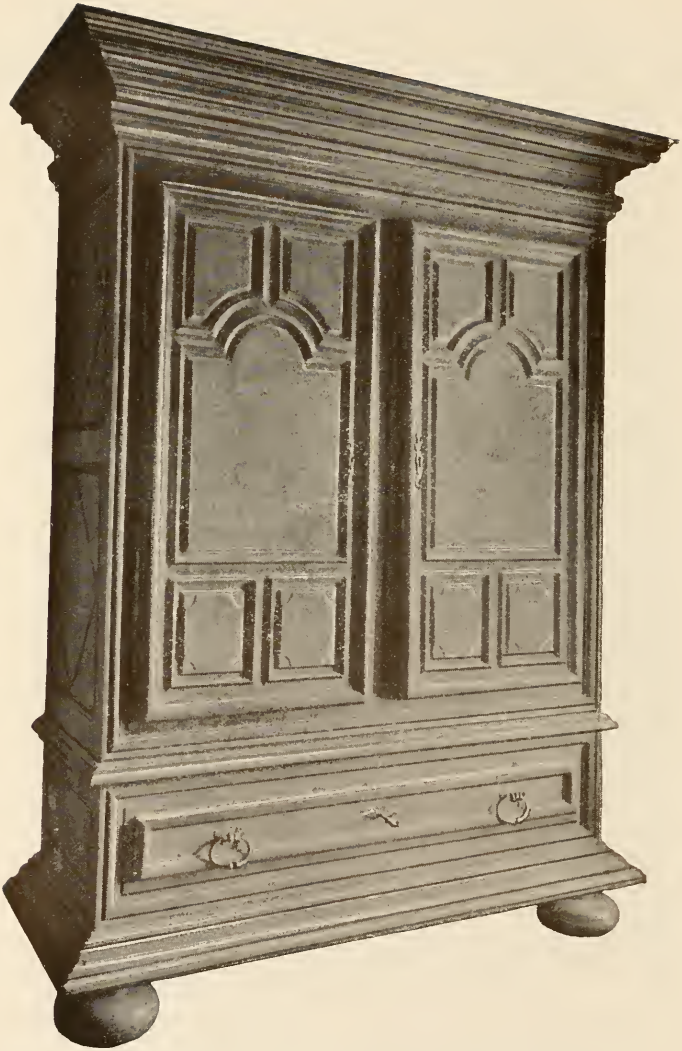

FIG. 7. LARGE CUPBOARD WITH ELABORATE CORNICE, IN WALNUT, FROM THE SOUTH-WEST

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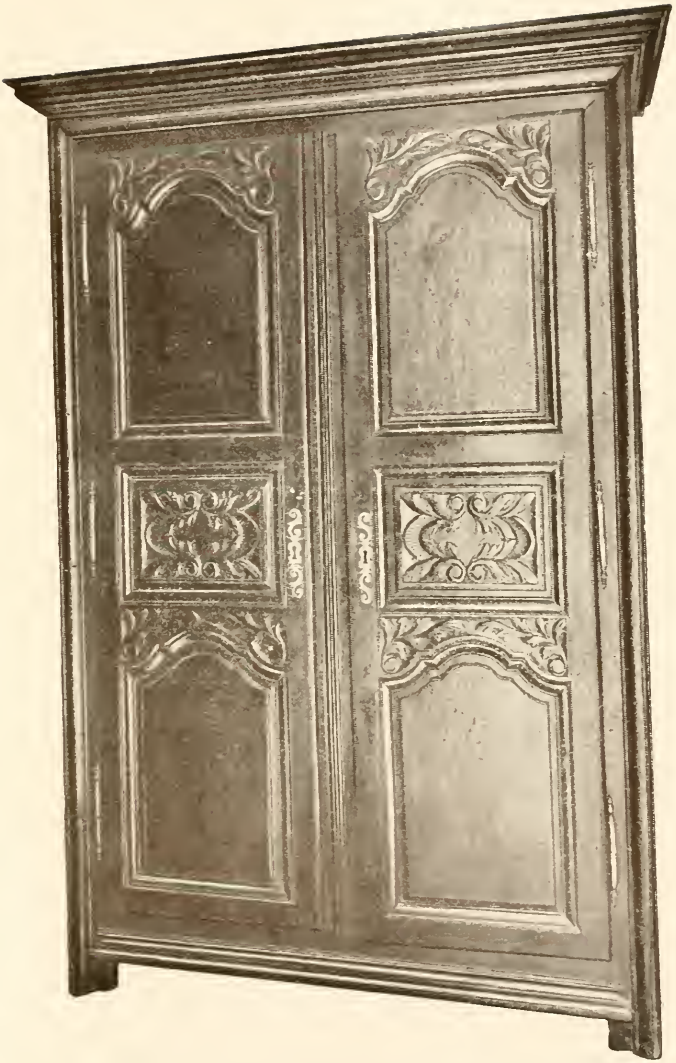

FIG. 8. CUPBOARD FROM SAINTONGE, WITH CARVED PANELS, IN OAK

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FIG. 9. LARGE WALNUT CUPBOARD, WITH ELABORATE MOULDINGS, FROM THE SOUTH-WEST

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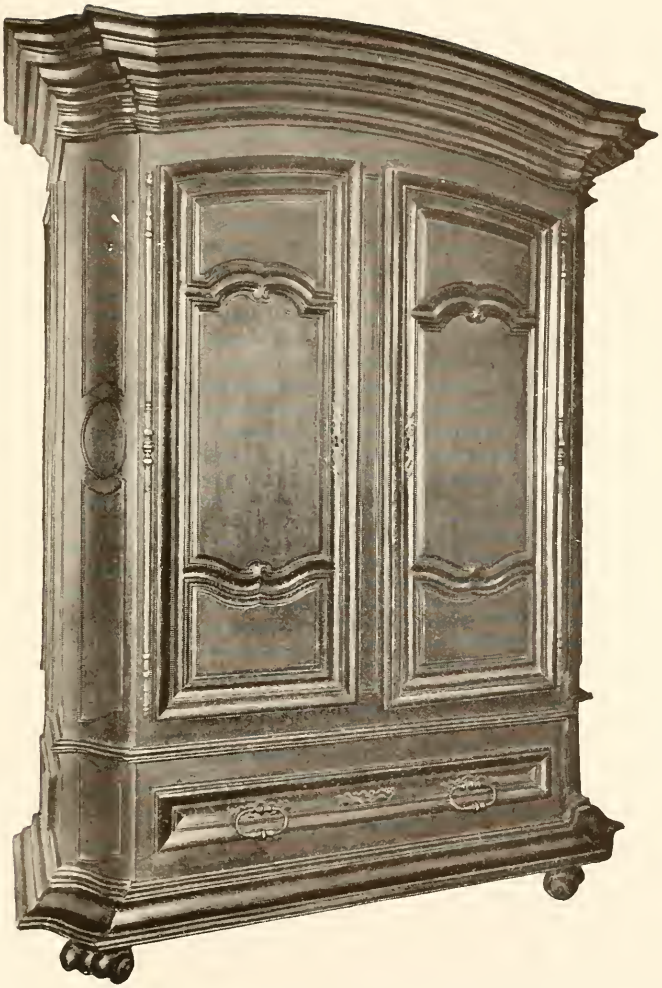

FIG. 10. VERY LARGE CUPBOARD WITH ARCHED PEDIMENT, IN WALNUT, END OF THE STYLE. FROM THE SOUTH-WEST.

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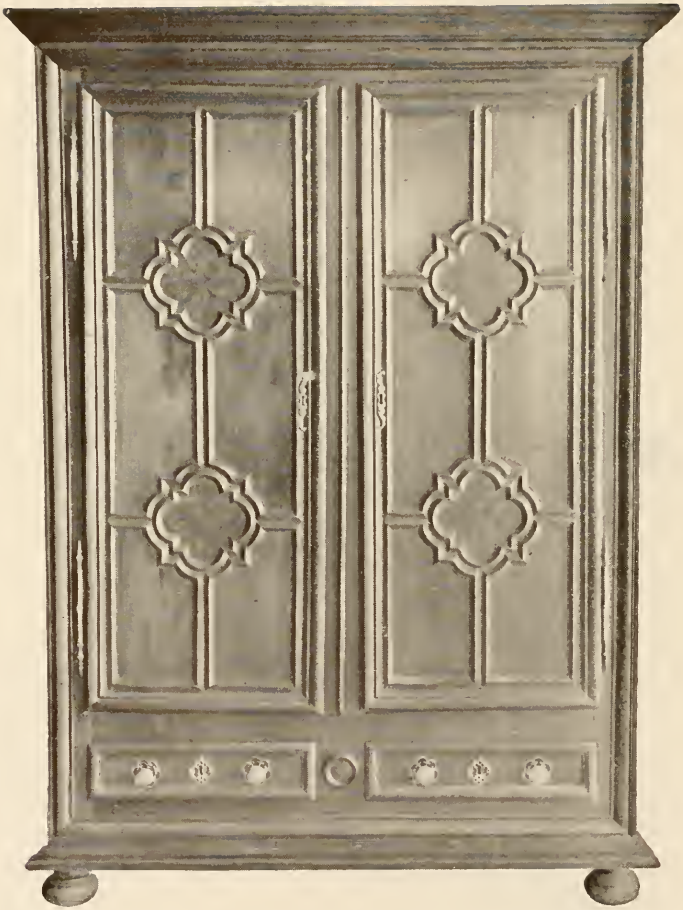

FIG. 11. LORRAINE CUPBOARD IN OAK, WITH MEDALLIONS, ORNAMENTED WITH MARQUETRY STARS

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FIG. 12. OAK ALSATIAN BUFFET IN TWO SECTIONS, WITH ARCHED PEDIMENT

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FIG. 13. VERY LARGE DRESSER-SIDEBOARD-COMMODE, FROM LORRAINE, IN CHERRYWOOD

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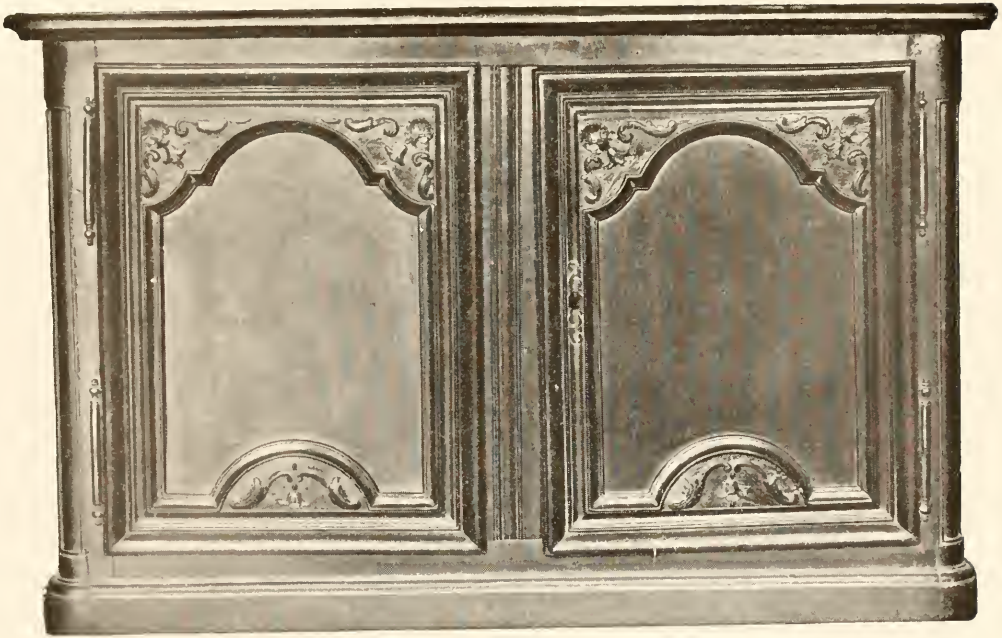

FIG. 14. WALNUT UNDER CUPBOARD

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FIG. 15. COFFER SET ON A TABLE WITH A DRAWER, FROM NORMANDY

FIG. 16. COFFER IN PIGSKIN, STUDDED WITH NAILS

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FIG. 17. MARQUETRY COMMODE, WITH GILT BRONZES

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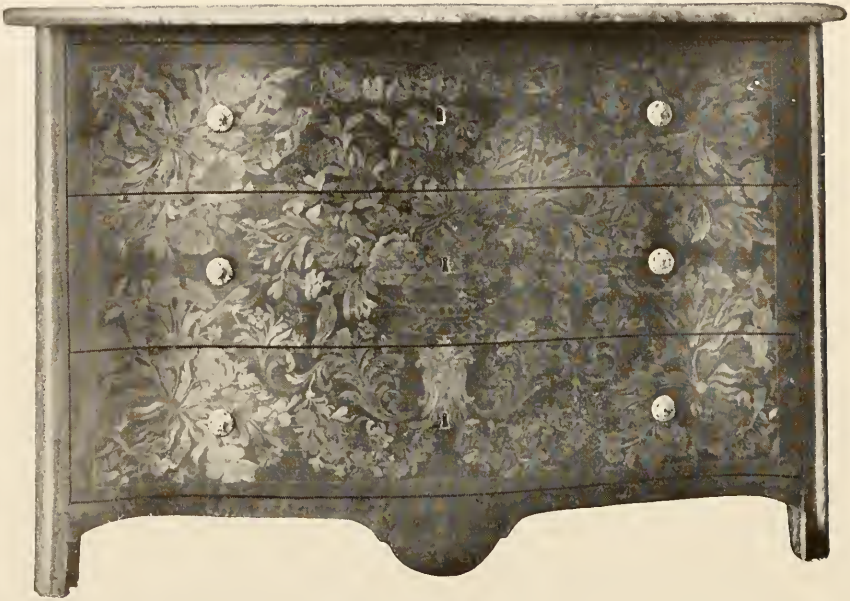

FIG. 18. MARQUETRY COMMODE IN THE STYLE OF THE LOW COUNTRIES

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FIG. 19. COMMODE VENEERED WITH VIOLET-WOOD

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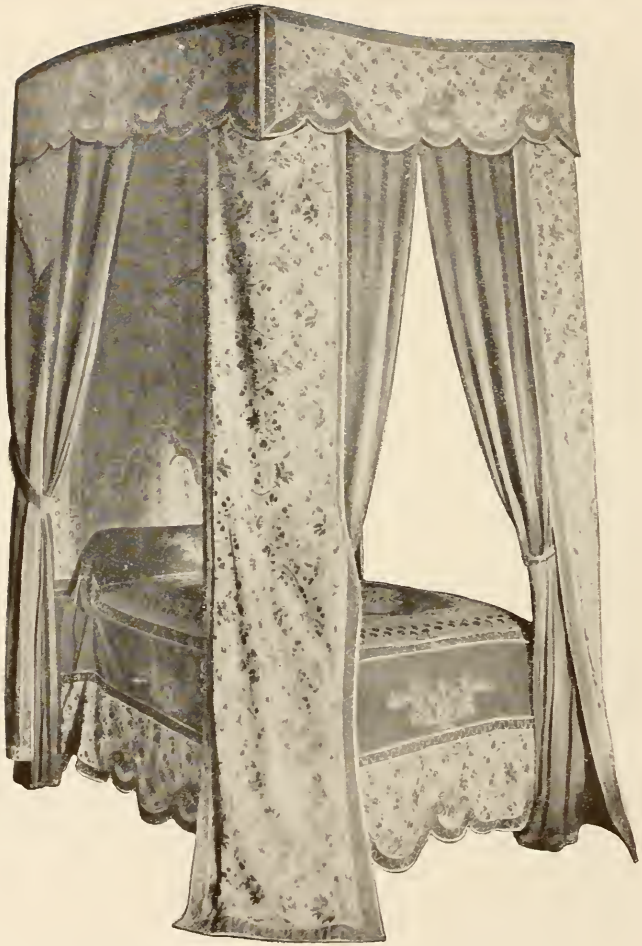

FIG. 20. BED WITH CURVED DOSSIER AND CANTONNIÈRES

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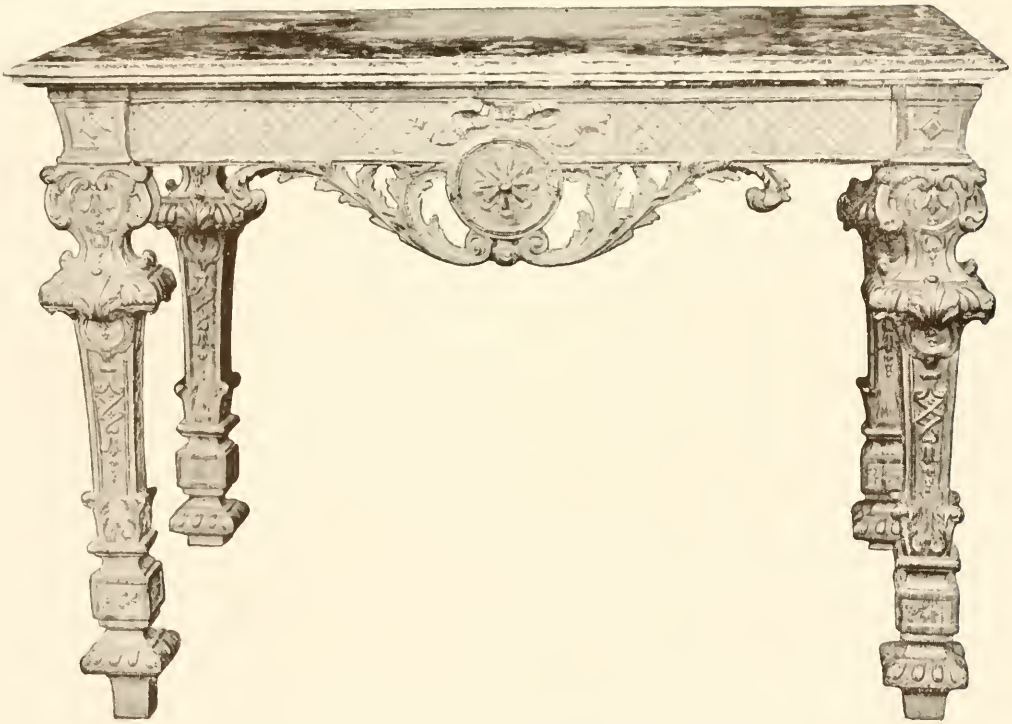

FIG. 21. TABLE WITH BALUSTER LEGS, NATURAL OAK

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FIG. 22. SMALL TABLE WITH CONSOLE LEGS, IN GILT WOOD

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FIG. 23. SMALL TABLE WITH TURNED BALUSTER LEGS

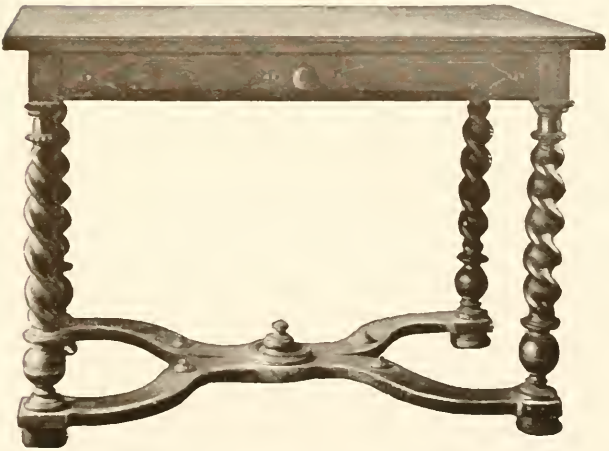

FIG. 24. TABLE WITH TWISTED LEGS, FROM NORMANDY

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FIG. 25. SMALL RUSTIC TABLE WITH CONSOLE OR "DOES' FOOT" LEGS

FIG. 26. SMALL TABLE WITH BRACKET-SHAPED LEGS, IN CHERRYWOOD

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FIG. 27. LARGE BUREAU WITH EIGHT TURNED BALUSTER LEGS AND NUMEROUS DRAWERS

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FIG. 28. SIMPLE ARM-CHAIR WITH TURNED BALUSTER LEGS

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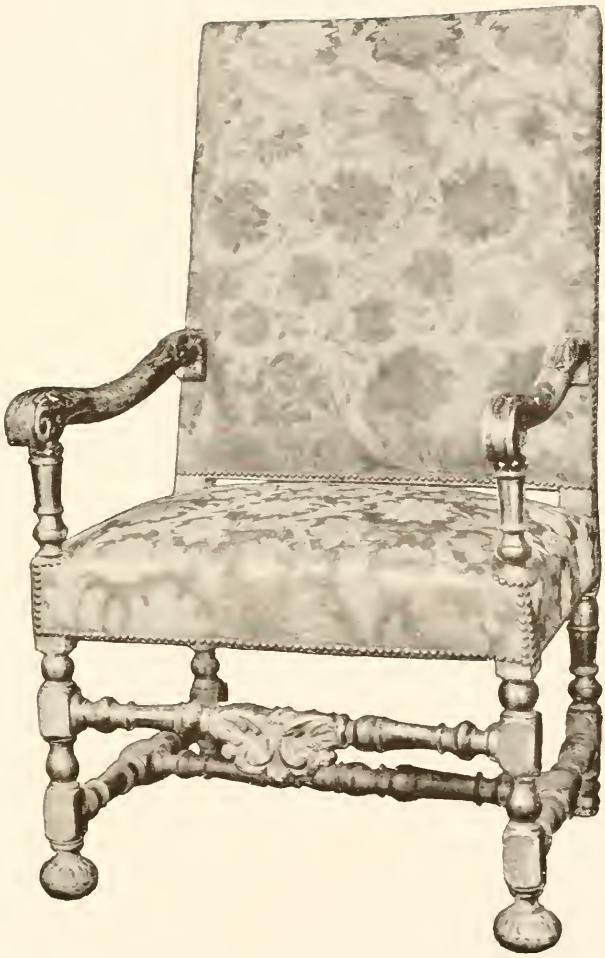

FIG. 29. GILT WOOD ARM-CHAIR, COVERED WITH GREEN AND GOLD BROCADE

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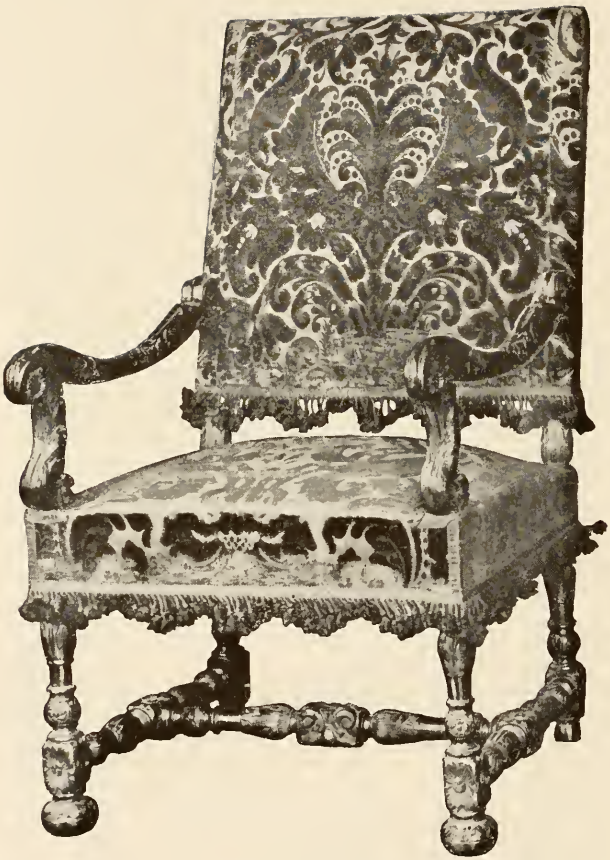

FIG. 30. ARM-CHAIR OF NATURAL WALNUT, COVERED WITH RED GENOA VELVET

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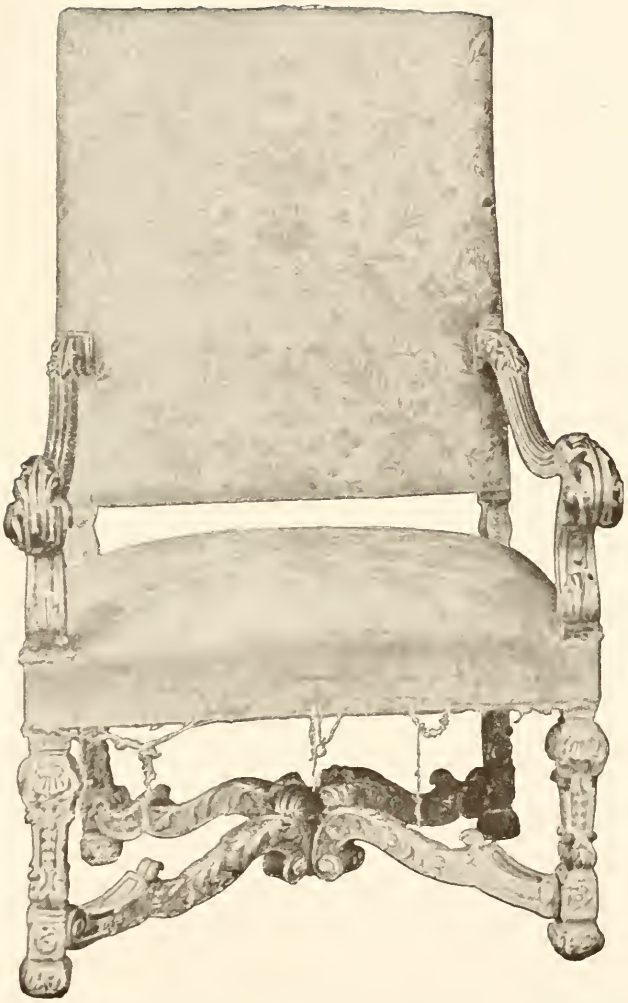

FIG. 31. ARM-CHAIR OF GILDED AND PAINTED WOOD, COVERED WITH WHITE AND SILVER BROCADE

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FIG. 32. ARM-CHAIR WITH CONSOLE-SHAPED LEGS, WITH BEAUTIFUL MOULDINGS

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FIG 33. CONFESSIONAL-SHAPED EASY CHAIR, COVERED WITH TAPESTRY IN BIG AND SMALL STITCH

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FIG. 34. CHAIR OF "BRACKET"-SHAPED TYPE

FIG. 35. SIMPLE ARM-CHAIR OF TURNED WOOD

FIG. 36. ARM-CHAIR OF THE BRACKET TYPE

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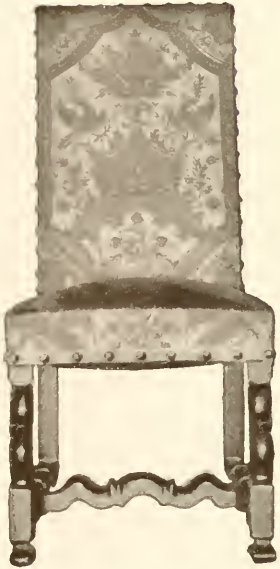

FIG. 37. CHAIR FROM THE SOUTH-WEST, MODERN LEATHER

FIG. 38. CHAIR FROM AUVERGNE WITH BALUSTER LEGS

FIG. 39. CANE CHAIR WITH LEGS
EN FACADE

FIG. 40. WOODEN CHAIR
FROM LORRAINE

FIG. 41. ARM-CHAIR MADE OF WOOD.
NORMANDY, WITH FLEMISH INFLUENCE

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FIG. 42. DOOR LEAF, OAK

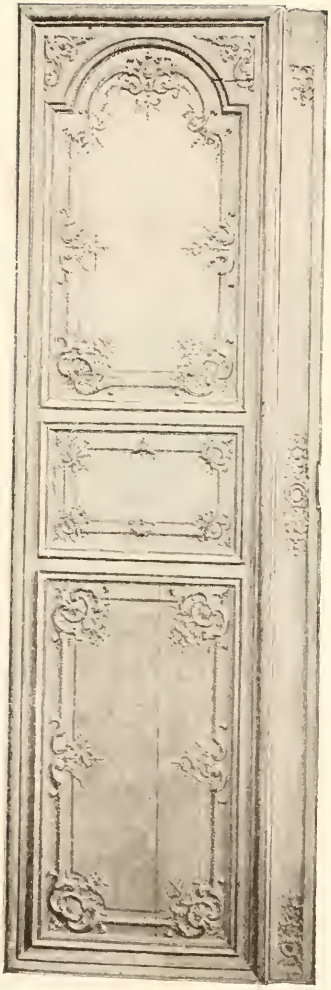

FIG. 43. DOOR LEAF, OAK

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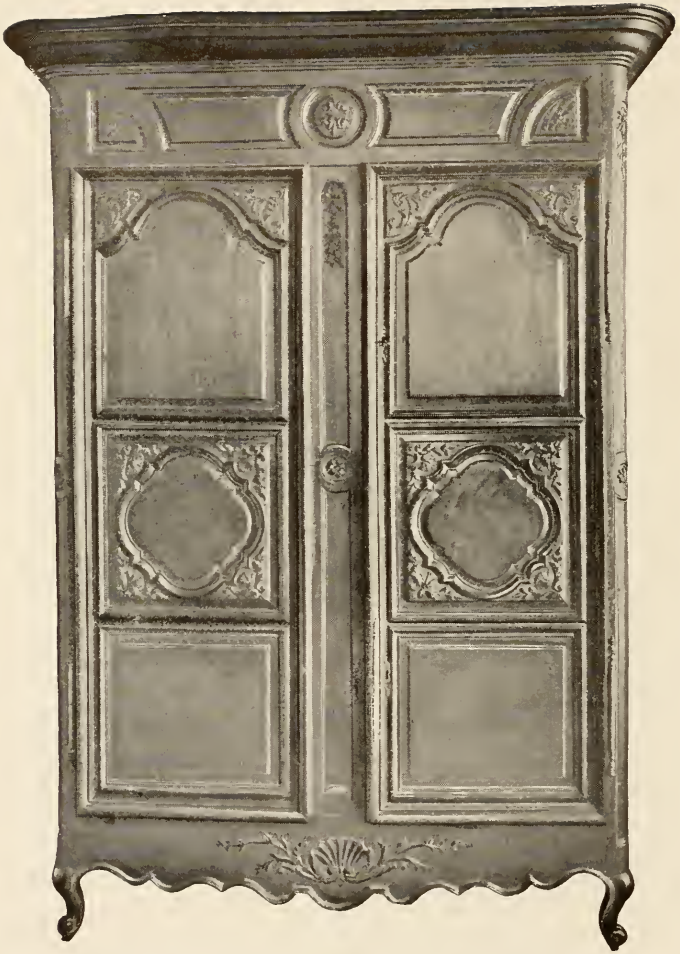

FIG. 44. PROVENCAL CUPBOARD, WITH CABRIOLET FEET, IN WALNUT

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FIG. 45. NORMAN CUPBOARD WITH CLAW FEET, IN OAK

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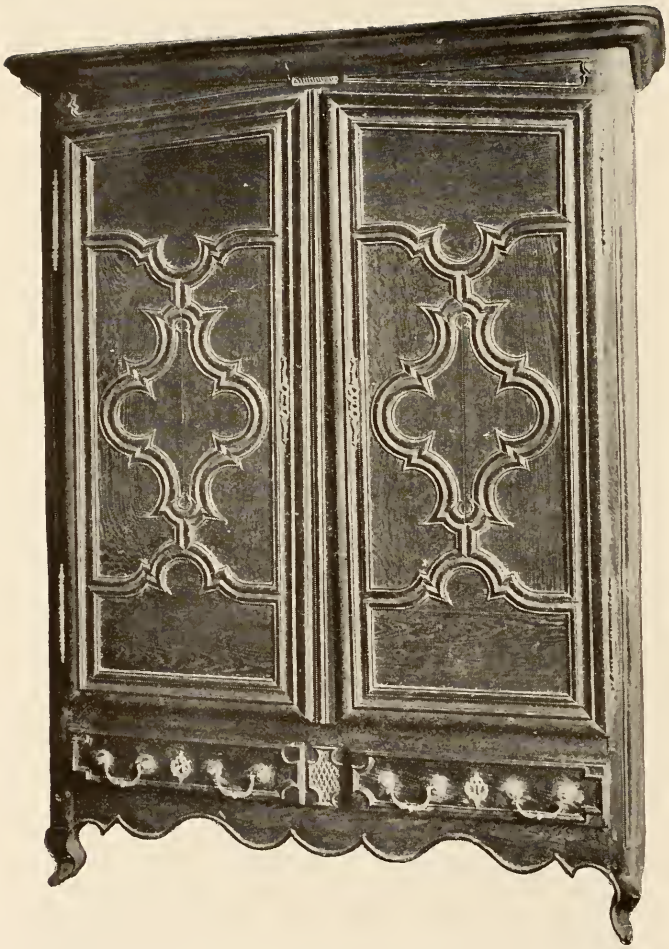

FIG. 46. LORRAINE CUPBOARD WITH CABRIOLET FEET, IN OAK

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FIG. 47. ALSATIAN BUFFET IN TWO SECTIONS, WITH SMALL MARQUETRY PANELS

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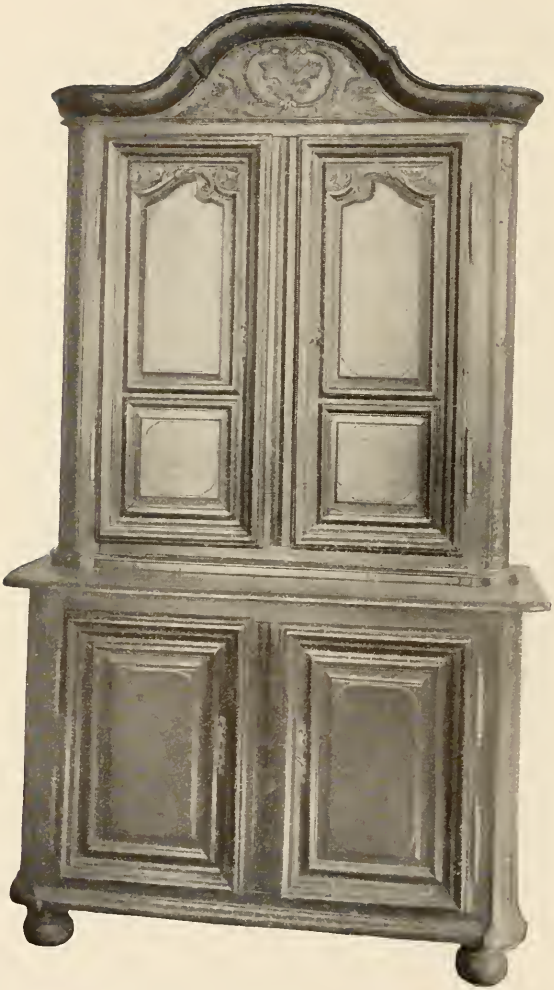

FIG. 48. ALSATIAN BUFFET IN TWO SECTIONS, IN OAK

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FIG. 49. LARGE SIDEBOARD-DRESSER-COMMODE, FROM LORRAINE, WITH INLAID WORK

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FIG. 50. NORMAN DRESSER-SIDEBOARD IN OAK

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FIG. 51. SMALL DRESSER-SIDEBOARD, FROM LORRAINE, MADE OF OAK

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FIG. 55. SIMPLE COMMODE IN ROSEWOOD VENEER

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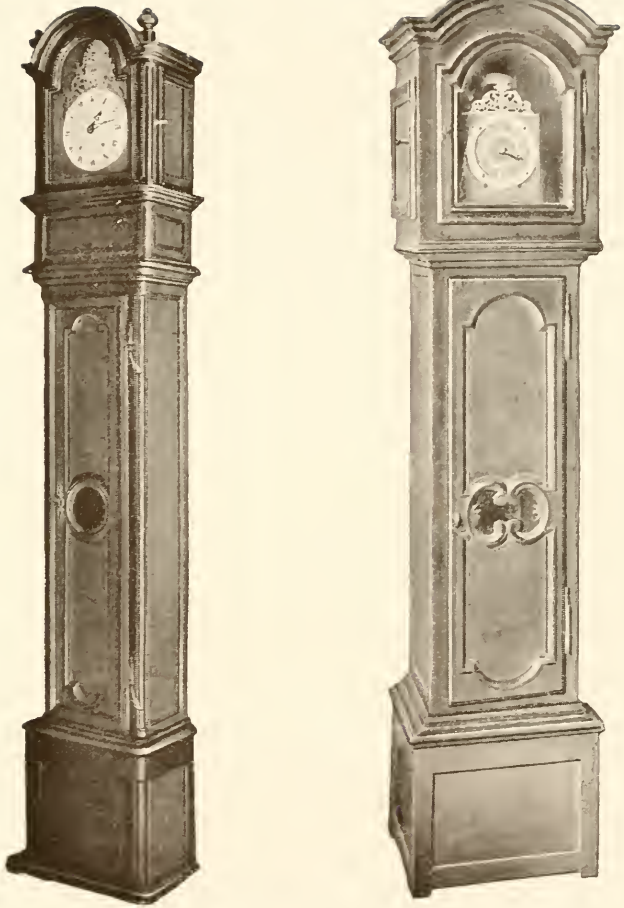

FIGS. 56 AND 57. CASE CLOCKS FROM LORRAINE, IN OAK

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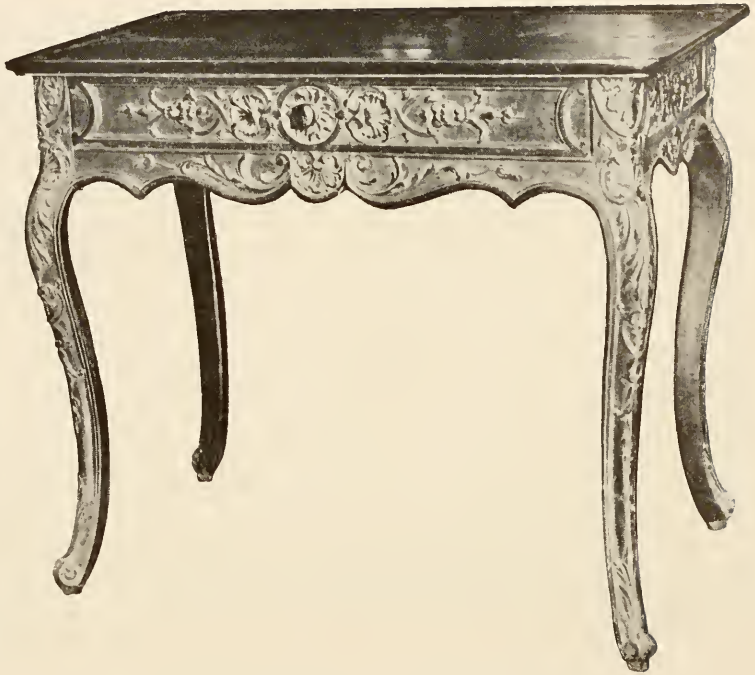

FIG. 58. SMALL TABLE WITH DOE'S FOOT LEGS, SUNK TOP AND INCISED DECORATION

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FIG. 59. SMALL TABLE WITH DOE'S FOOT LEGS

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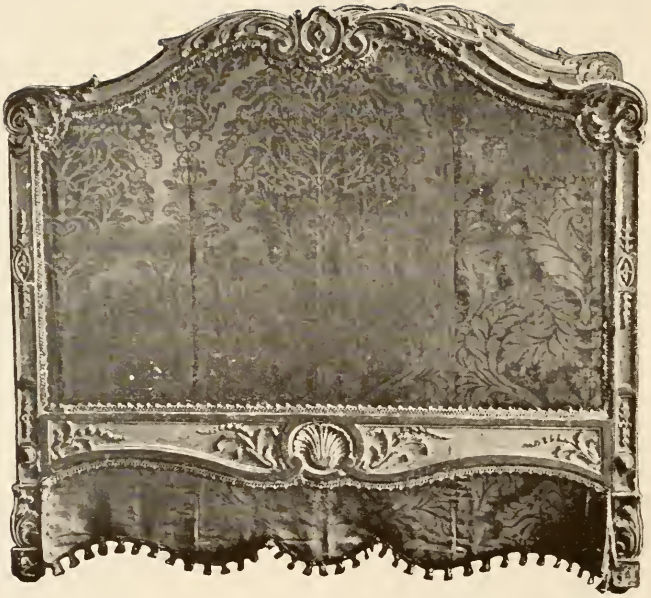

FIG. 60. BED WITH LOW POSTS IN GILDED WOOD

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FIG. 61. ARM-CHAIR WITH CURVED TOP TO BACK

FIG. 62. ARM-CHAIR WITH THE ARMS SET BACK

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FIG. 63. ARM-CHAIR OF "BRACKET" TYPE WITH ARMS NOT SET BACK

FIG. 64. ARM-CHAIR OF THE SAME TYPE WITH ARMS SET BACK

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FIG. 65. ARM-CHAIR WITH ARM-PADS AND VISIBLE FRIEZE OF WOOD

FIG. 66. ARM-CHAIR OF "BRACKET" TYPE WITH ARM-PADS

FIGS. 67 AND 68. CHAIR AND ARM-CHAIR WITH DOE'S FOOT LEGS AND STRETCHERS

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FIGS. 69 AND 70. ARM-CHAIRS, WITH ARMS VERY CURVED AND WITHOUT STRETCHERS

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FIG. 71. TALL CHAIR IN NATURAL WOOD COVERED WITH BROCHÉ SILK

FIG. 72. CHAIR IN NATURAL WOOD COVERED WITH WHITE AND SILVER BROCADE

FIG. 73. LARGE "CONFESSIONAL" ARM-CHAIR

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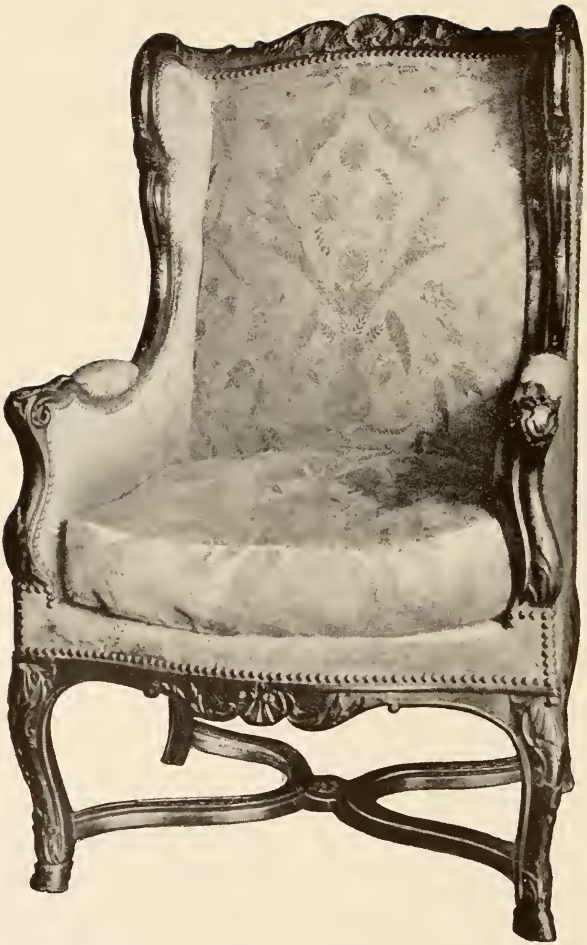

FIG. 74. BERGÈRE-ARM-CHAIR, CONFESSIONAL SHAPE, WITH THE WOOD SHOWING

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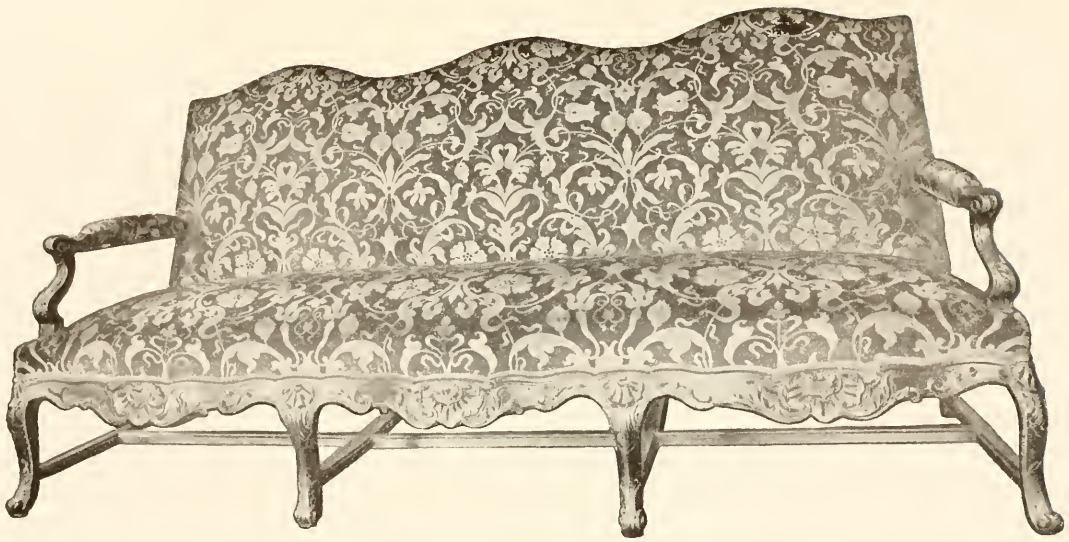

FIG. 75. LARGE SOFA WITH EIGHT LEGS, NATURAL WALNUT

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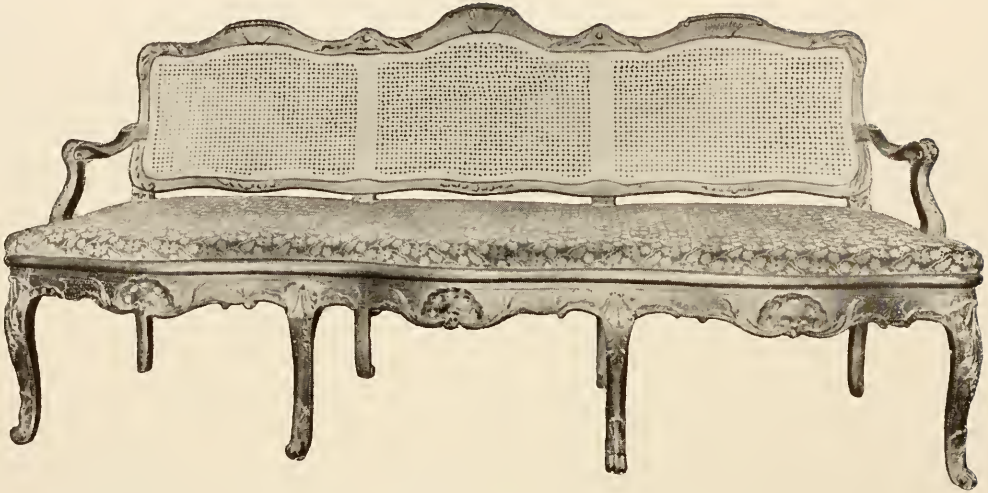

FIG. 76. CANE SOFA WITH ITS MATTRESS CUSHION, OF BEECHWOOD

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FIG. 77. CANE CHAIR WITH LEGS
EN FAÇADE

FIG. 78. CANE ARM-CHAIR WITH OBLIQUE-SET LEGS

FIG. 79. CANE CHAIR WITH EXAGGERATED DOE'S FOOT LEGS

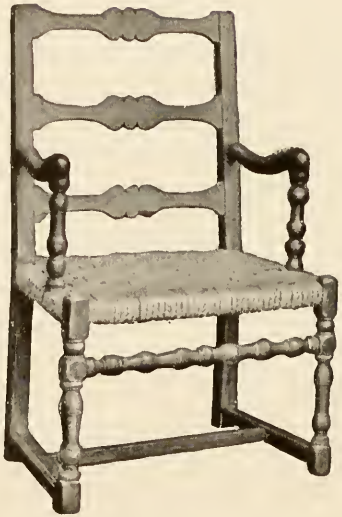

FIG. 80. STRAW CHAIR FROM AUVERGNE

FIG. 81. CANE CHAIR WITH STRETCHERS

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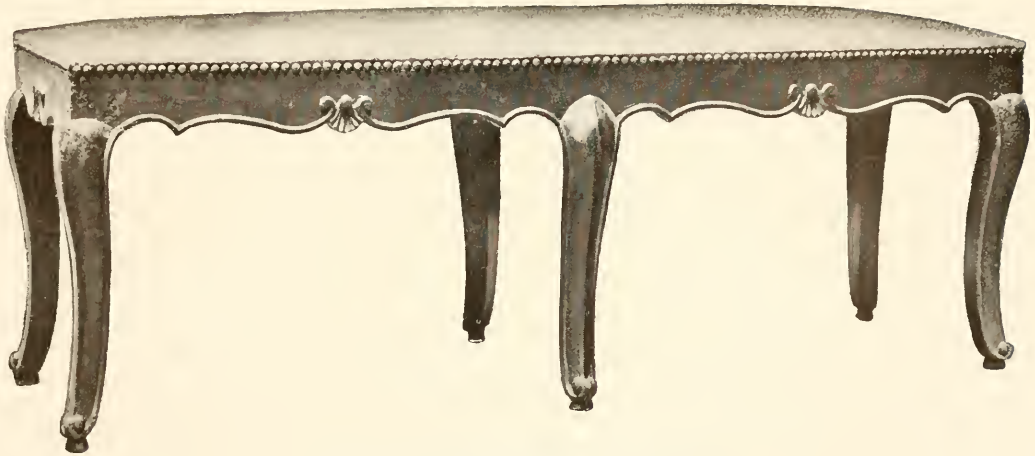

FIG. 82. PLAIN BENCH MADE OF BEECH

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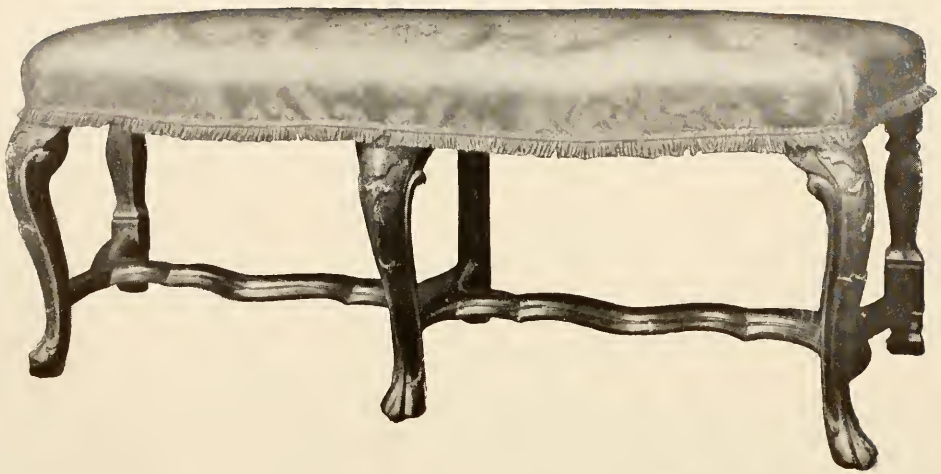

FIG. 83. WALL BENCH, WALNUT, COVERED WITH CRIMSON DAMASK

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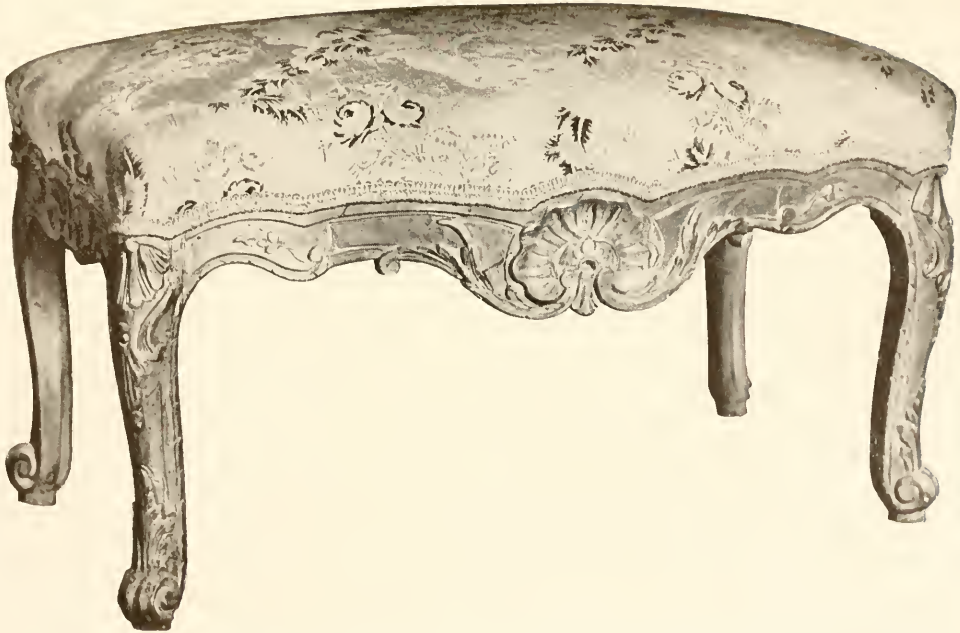

Fig. 84. STOOL (TABOURET OR PLACET), IN NATURAL WALNUT, COVERED WITH BROCHÉ SILK

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FIG. 85. SCREEN, MOUNTED IN NATURAL WALNUT, WITH PANEL OF SILVER-GREY DAMASK

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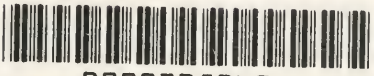

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